

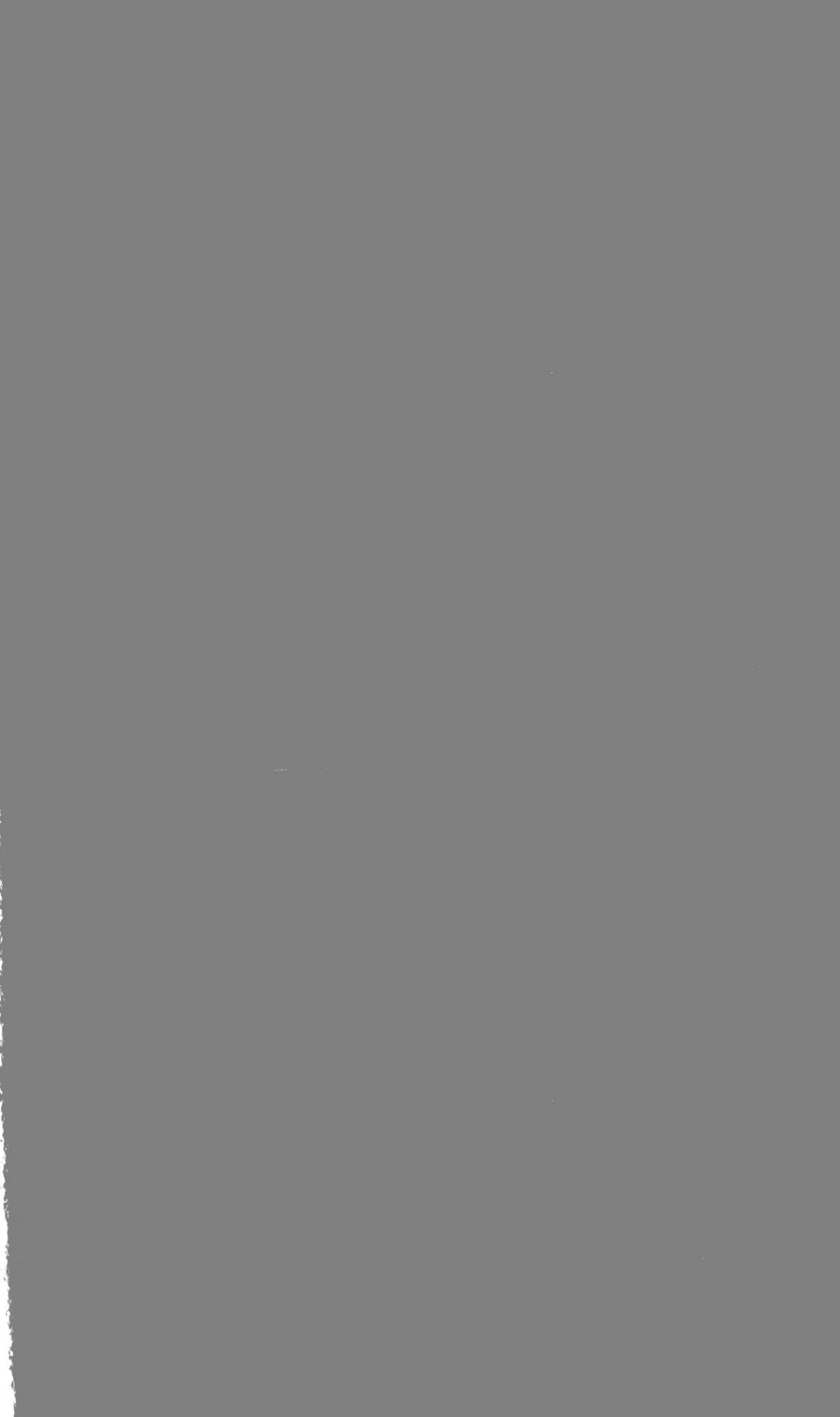
MILITARY CHAPLAINS'  
REVIEW

1987









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# Military Chaplains' Review

Summer 1987

## Spirituality

Christianity

Widening Frontiers

World War II

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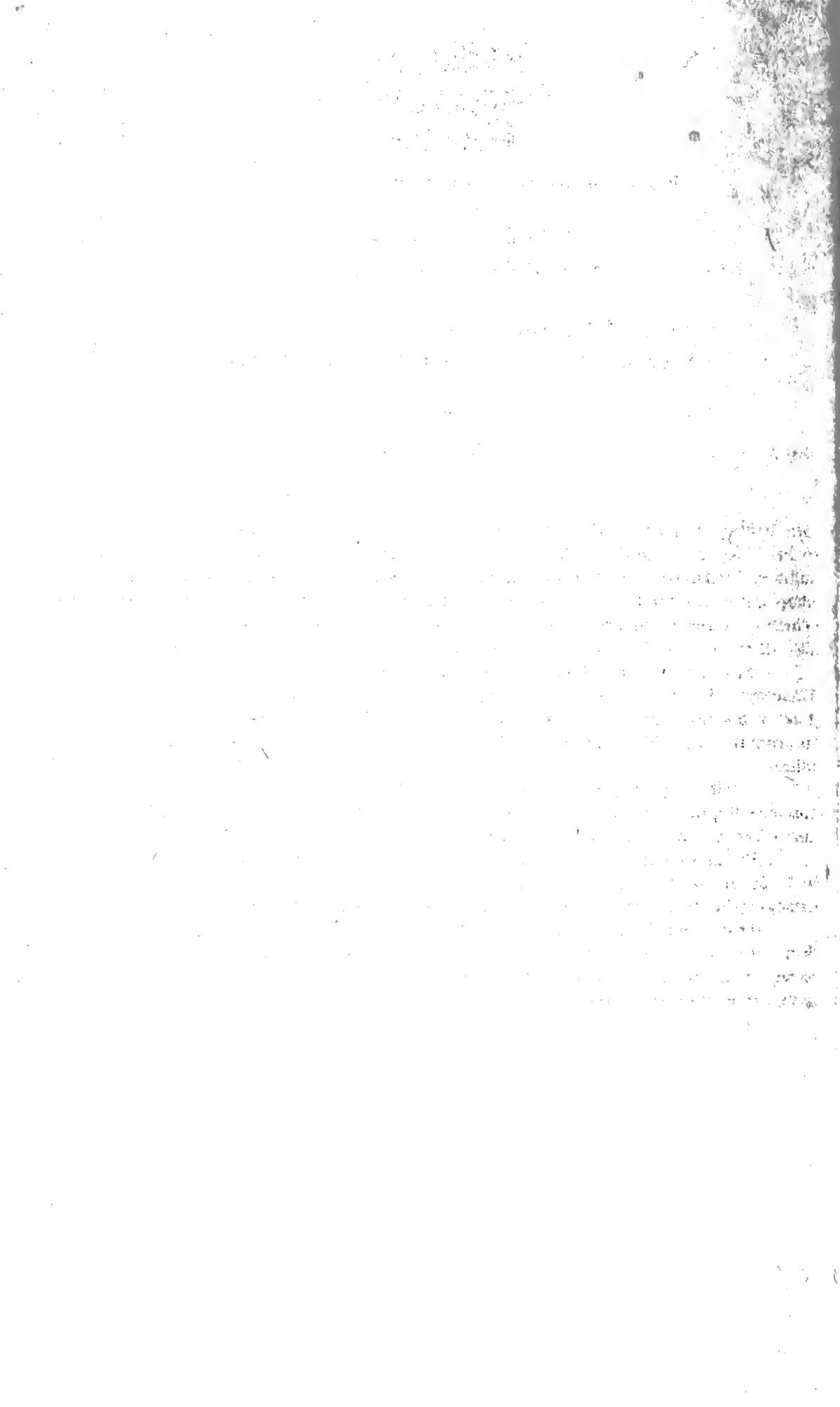


# Military Chaplains' Review

Summer 1987

## Spirituality





# **Military Chaplains' Review**

Professional Bulletin of the US Army Chaplain Corps

## **Chief of Chaplains**

Chaplain (MG) Norris L. Einertson

## **US Army Chaplain Board**

Chaplain (COL) John J. Hoogland, President

## **Editor**

Chaplain (MAJ) William Noble

*The Military Chaplains' Review* (ISSN 0360-9693) is published quarterly by the US Army Chaplain Board for the Chief of Chaplains. This professional bulletin for military chaplains is designed to be a medium in which those interested in the military chaplaincy can share the product of their experience and research. We welcome articles which are directly concerned with supporting and strengthening chaplains professionally. Preference will be given to those articles having value as reference material.

Articles should be submitted in duplicate, double spaced, to the editor, *Military Chaplains' Review*, United States Army Chaplain Board, Watters Hall, Bldg. 1207, Fort Monmouth, NJ 07703. Articles should be 12 to 20 pages long; and when appropriate, carefully documented. Detailed editorial guidelines are available from the editor.

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Private subscriptions and rates are available from Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Second class official postage paid at Red Bank, New Jersey and additional mailing offices.

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## **The Unit Ministry Team Marriage and Family**

Persons interested in contributing an article on one of the themes listed above should coordinate with the editor to insure that the contributions fits well with other articles planned for the issue.

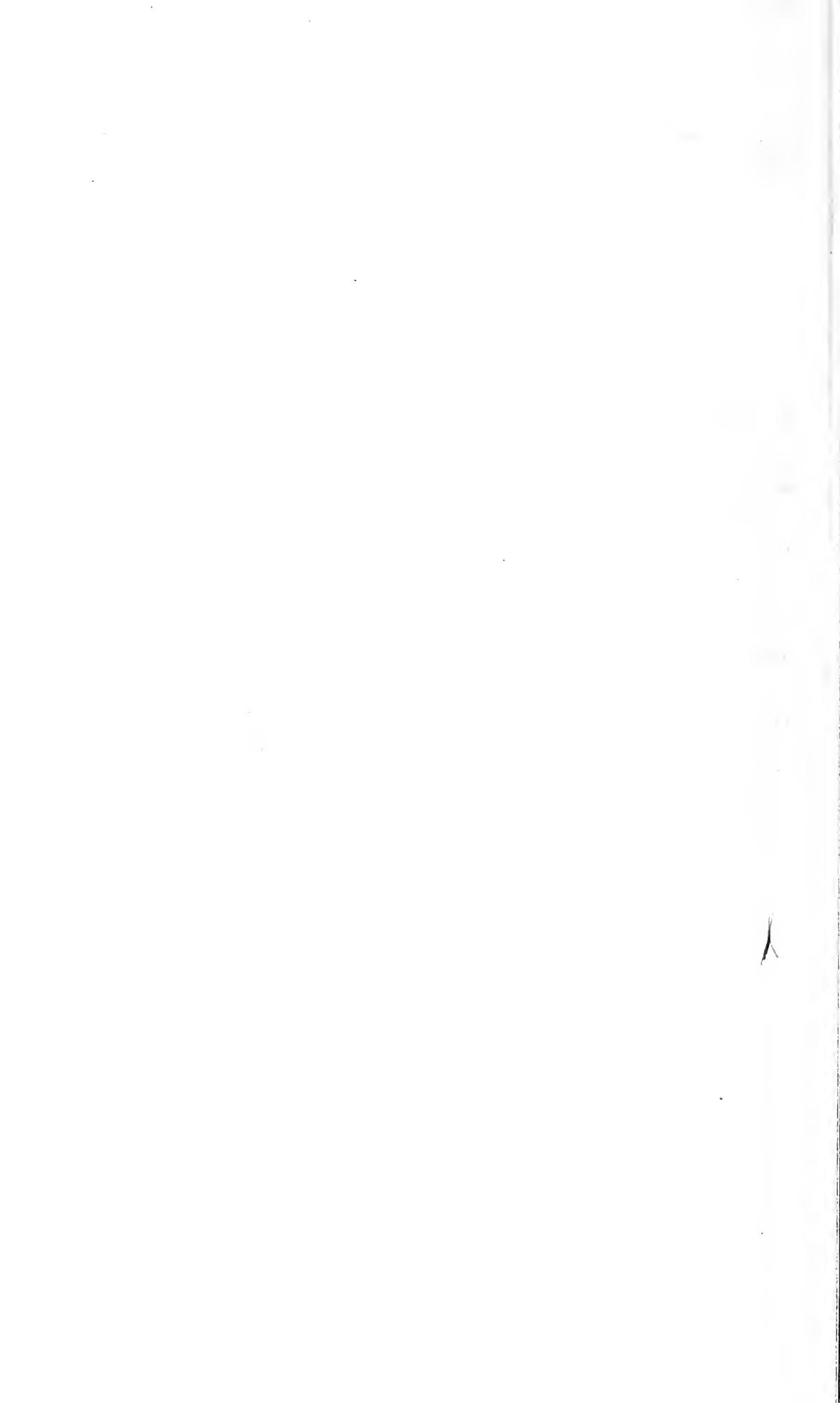
The *Military Chaplains' Review* prints an occasional "non-thematic" issue. Any subject having to do with chaplain ministry is appropriate for such issues.

## **Spirituality . . .**

Spirituality is the house wherein our name dwells. The foundation of the house rests on the twin stones of ethics and aesthetics and is, in the simplest language, how we are before each other and before God. It serves as a place to live, as a place to breathe, as a place to hide, as a place to love, and from time to time, and finally, as a place to leave. Its architecture, sometimes fashioned with care and discipline and sometimes forgetfully, is always shaped—whether we like it or not—with the help of others.

This issue of the *Military Chaplains' Review* speaks about spirituality and especially about the spirituality of the soldier. The articles are reflective, imaginative, and in the best sense of prescriptive, sometimes directive. The articles are offered with the belief that if the soldier is to be courageous, candid, and committed, then the soldier must pray.

William Noble



Headquarters  
Department of the Army  
Washington, DC

PB 16-87-2 (TEST)  
July 1987  
Summer 1987

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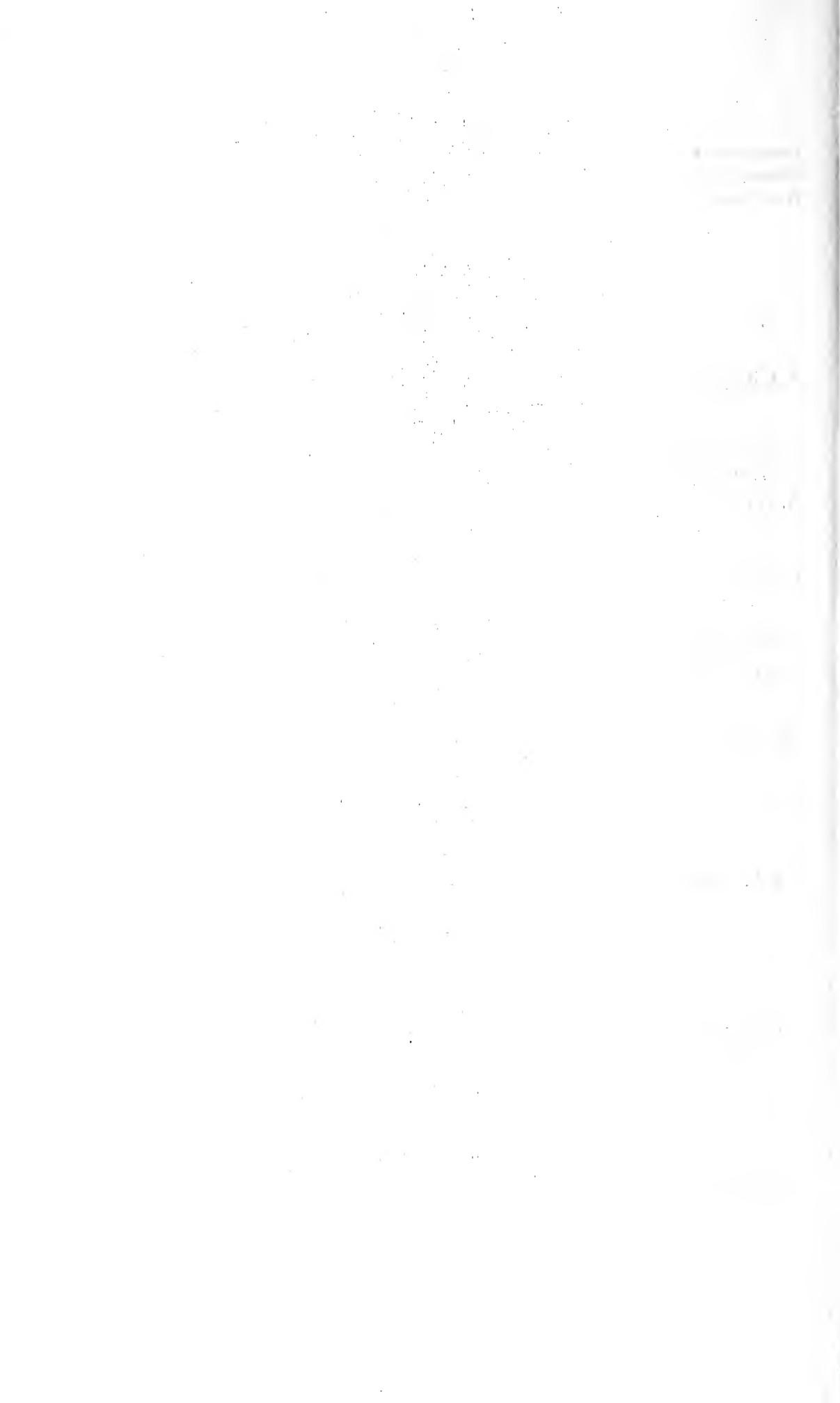
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# A Christian Soldier

**Gregory S. Govan**

Two years ago next Tuesday, on the 24th of March 1985, Major Arthur D. Nicholson, Jr., United States Army, was killed by a Soviet sentry in East Germany.\* He died on the fifth Sunday of Lent, the Sunday before Palm Sunday. The lectionary readings for that day were the valley of dry bones from *Ezekiel*, the story of the raising of Lazarus from the *Gospel of John*, and from *Romans* 8 Paul's words: "But if Christ is in you, although your bones are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you."

For a while, I confess, the bright hope of life out of death expressed in the lectionary contended with the very real loss of a friend, and more than a friend. We thought to ourselves as we travelled from the late winter of Russia to Berlin, and then to Washington's early spring: Is the season of rebirth a cruel jest this year? No, no jest. But there was much to learn.

It was threatening rain that day, exactly one week before Good Friday, but what I noticed first was the wind. It rushed across the airfield, flapping coattails and carrying tatters of solemn music skittering round the runway. An honor guardsman's hat blew away,

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\*This article was first given as a Prayer Breakfast Address at the US Army War College Memorial Chapel, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, on 18 March 1987.

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Colonel Gregory S. Govan presently serves on the faculty of the United States Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where he is Director of Soviet Studies in the Center for Land Warfare. He is a graduate of Davidson College and the University of Virginia. In previous assignments Colonel Govan has served as Assistant Army Attaché in Moscow and as a member of the United States Military Liaison Mission to the Commander in Chief, Group of Soviet Forces, Germany.

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rolling across the apron. We stood at attention, grief contending with duty, the desire to give due honor contesting with the need to mourn. The casket, covered by the flag, was carried slowly into the great open rear door of the airplane. We boarded afterwards, to accompany Nick home, to lay him in a lovely garden called Arlington, having given him up to his other family, his country, and the media. And there, too, it was the wind. The rain held off, but the wind still blew, sharpening the rifle volleys, the bugle's sad summons to sleep and duty ended on this posting forever.

It was God's breadth. The wind. What the Hebrews called *ruah*. It contained the Spirit of God. It was God, His divine and creative energy that made life of dust and that filled the room with rushing at Pentecost. And it was here, like an engraving tool driving every detail onto my mind. Set this down. Write this. This is your brother whom you grieve. Tell the others.

Surely the world has known tragedy enough for hundreds of devotions since that afternoon Nick was killed. But, you see, I cannot relate to the deaths in ones or twos or hundreds of people I did not know. And because I did not know them, I could not stand there at two airports and three church services, and try to be a good soldier and render honors and offer what comfort I could, all the while feeling God's breath upon us, all the while knowing as surely as I know anything that this was my friend, my brother, and hardest of all, that he really had liked me.

No, we were not brothers by blood. I borrowed that from Shakespeare, *Henry V*, when it was my turn to leave the organization where Nick and I had served. If you have shared in the brotherhood of such a unit, you will understand; if not, I can only hope you will find it at least once in your Army career. I paid what honor I could to past and present at that moment, saying how sorry I was to leave a group that truly was "we few, we happy few, we band of brothers."

And it was true! Nick's death proved it. For ten hours on the plane back to America we shared unit stories like a big family. Karen, Nick's widow, proudly wore the unit crest on her dress, her badge of belonging, her mark of sisterhood. And she was supported by the family, carried through the ordeal of grieving and giving up, of yielding to public requirements over private mourning. We of the band of brothers, past and present, gathered, as families do for weddings and funerals. And like all families, ours served unseen, bearing up, doing details, embracing and saying its good to see you, but I wish it were under different circumstances. And the family assurances to one another that Nick himself was really present with us and loving the day. Because he was with us, and because the day was full of the things he loved—the Army, his country, and friends. Oh, God, the happiness and sorrow of being a brother!

And what was God so insistent that I learn?

First, Nick died a Christian. At his memorial service in Berlin, the chaplain could point to the place in the chapel where he usually sat with his family. Over and under all the natural, human sorrowing, there was a very real comfort—"that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope," as Paul says in *1 Thessalonians* 4:13. Nick was a believer, and as we were brothers, so shall we be, brothers, as surely as there is a communion of saints and a resurrection of the body.

Second, the life of every Christian is an icon, an image, of the life of Christ. In Nick's case, we are put in mind of Jesus' death for us. The Washington funeral service was not just a state funeral, it was a Christian service where we recited the Creed and the Gospel was preached. The chaplain looked, as undoubtedly many were doing, for some meaning or sense to Nick's death. He said this death should put us in mind of the events in the Church year that were to be remembered the next day, Palm Sunday.

Nick died, dragging all of us into profound feeling of many kinds, chiefly sadness. And, as I said earlier, he died leaving me with the assurance that he had liked me, cared about me. It is an image of how we should feel about the Easter season, the annual commemoration of God's death in Christ for us. Because, you see, God, my creator, that immortal, invisible power, became a man in order to become my brother. To like and care for me. And it was as my brother that he was killed that first holy week.

Third, the life of Christian brothers is an image of the life with Christ. If such things can be measured at all, we "band of brothers" felt this loss as keenly as Nick's "real" or biological family. What was our right, our claim to such feelings? Isn't it presumptuous to talk about my grieving for this person, no kin to me? No, it is not presumptuous; our claim, our right, was bought. We paid for it with shared disappointments, hopes, trust, failures, kindnesses and generosity, with a body of shared experiences we found—and find—difficult to communicate to others outside the "band of brothers." It was bought, dearly bought, with the only and most precious gift we all have—our time for each other, a gift we give or withhold from one another almost without thinking.

And that is what God in Christ did. He won the right to be called our brother by sharing every aspect of our life with us. There is no feeling that you and I can have that he has not had. There is no loss to sadden us nor little triumph to delight us that he has not known. He is there with us to put an arm around the shoulder, to smile with happy memories, to laugh when something good happens. He is there in other believers. Breaking bread with them, whether in communion or Eucharist, or merely in day to day fellowship, we can see Christ. Living together, not withholding our time, we build up the

bonds of brotherhood—one of the ways by which God has chosen, in his wisdom, to reveal himself to us.

Now many can have this personal experience through prayer. It is available to all of us, and the biblical accounts of such prayer fellowship are many, Jesus himself giving us the best example. Certainly, if we want some memories to share later with God, we should make him part of everything in our lives now. That means prayer without ceasing, practicing the presence of God as the European medieval scholastic would have put it.

While prayer is direct fellowship with God, I believe few of us find it easy to maintain constant communion in this manner. Emerson observed that we were not meant to speak poetry, breathe pure oxygen, or be always wise. Prayer is the pure oxygen and poetry of the soul. Our normal air and prose are living with others. But our life together also can be the spark that turns knowledge into belief, data into experiential faith, theoretical ideas of some sort of God out there into absolute certainty that we are sharing life with our Creator. I cannot explain it, but I believe it happens. Our brotherhood together is not only the reflection of our relationship with God, it is the vehicle by which that relationship is established. It is not just a matter of, as the hymn says, “Who serves my Father as a son is surely kin to me.” It may be that I can only find my Father by embracing you as a brother. That is what God did in Christ, showing the Father to man who had been embraced as brother.

It is a lesson we seem to learn best in sorrow which is probably why the Church observes the discipline and practice of Lent. It isn’t that God is any farther from us when we are happy. Grief sharpens our awareness of his abiding.

Once my wife and I watched a Russian Orthodox funeral in Leningrad. One woman, the rites over for a moment and the coffin still open, expressed her grief by smoothing the ruffles around the head of her loved one, quietly performing an utterly useless, but loving act of kindness, no doubt as in life she had picked lint off a cuff or patted a collar flat. Watching, we knew that however foreign the ceremony and its ritual might be to us, God was there, very close, very perceived. I had reason to remember that Russian woman’s fingers straightening the ruffles, when I watched the quiet precision of the young soldiers who folded the flag over Nick’s casket, fussing away every last, invisible wrinkle, embodying in the strictest military formality the loving concern of family, of onlookers, of an institution and nation. The hearts of the brothers were in those soldiers’ hands as they pressed, folded, tucked and reverently passed the flag to be handed to Karen. And God was there. That I am here to tell you. Perhaps because we are so humanly lost and alone at moments like that, he is so much more evidently near.

Nick died to this world, but that is not the end of the story. This is Lent, which culminates in Easter. The lectionary for Lent and Easter tells of death, but even more it tells of life. The Good News is surely that God in Christ has conquered death. The message we shall shortly proclaim is that Christ is risen, He is risen indeed. Christ our brother, who was killed, is unheld by death. In that victory we all have hope to be again with my brother Nick, killed at Eastertide two years past. May he, and all of us, rest in fellowship with God, in the joy and hope and peace of the Risen Christ. *Amen.*

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# **Battleproofing The Inner Person: A Will And Faith Program**

**Thomas Mitchiner**

“Battleproofing The Inner Person: A Will and Faith Program” is a seminar and training workshop for soldiers on will and faith.\* It has been used by seven battalion commanders in the 2nd Armored Division at Fort Hood, Texas, as part of the unit preparation for training at the National Training Center and for REFORGER. B-TIP, as the program has come to be called, strengthens the will

\*Chaplain Thomas Mitchiner developed the concept for this program while a patient at the Darnell Army Hospital, where he was hospitalized for 65 days for the third of four operations for cancer. The medical consensus, even before the first surgery, was an 80% chance of death within two years. Shortly after he left the operating room following his third surgery to remove cancer in his lymph nodes, he was given no medical hope of surviving.

The idea for this unusual program was developed under considerable stress and threat, and those circumstances influenced the nature and shape of the project. According to Chaplain Mitchiner, he learned during those 65 days in the hospital, the necessity of will and faith for overcoming adversity. As he watched and talked with other patients, he observed how quickly or how slowly they recovered seemed as much a function of will and faith as of medical procedures. Some young soldiers remained cheerful and realistically optimistic about recovery, in spite of discomfort and negative prognosis; others became dependent on their prescription drugs to endure the discomfort in spite of a positive prognosis for recovery. Following Chaplain Mitchiner’s hospitalization, he shared his observations on will and faith with other members of the military, and they shared their experiences about the necessity of will and faith to perform the military mission for surviving in war, as a soldier in combat, as wounded, or as one taken prisoner. These exchanges led to the beginning of the B-TIP program for soldiers.

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Chaplain (MAJ) Thomas W. Mitchiner received his Bachelor of Science degree in the area of Public Administration from California State University at Long Beach, his Master of Divinity degree from American Baptist Seminary in California, and his Master of Education degree from Boston University (1981). He recently completed an assignment as the Assistant Division Chaplain, 2nd Armored Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

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and faith of the soldiers who participate so that they can cope with personal adversity, perform the military mission, and survive on the battlefield, even if wounded or taken prisoner. This article introduces the program, explains the philosophy, and describes some practical aspects of the program.

## Sessions On Will

The B-TIP seminar is ordinarily conducted at the battalion level with morning and afternoon sessions with the whole group and with follow-up, small group sessions at the squad level for discussion and the exchange of ideas. The large-group sessions are designed to define will and faith as they relate to soldiering, and the smaller sessions are to assist in making personal and practical applications of the theory.

After opening remarks by the unit commander and the chaplain, the moderator—who may be the unit chaplain—develops a working definition of the meaning and importance of the will. Values, relationships, and goals are defined as three ingredients necessary for a strong and reliable will.

## Values

Values have been defined as the guide or reference points for the journey of life. If beauty is a personal value, then beauty is looked for as a reference point. If wealth is a personal value, then wealth is a reference point. If duty to God and country are personal values, then they are looked upon as reference points. Values form a congruent system for guiding behavior. Values which make the best reference points are developed, dependable, and relatively without conflict.

### Developed Values

In *Meeting Yourself Halfway*,'' Dr. Sidney B. Simon lists a seven step process for identifying fully developed values. The fully developed value is:

- a. chosen freely.
- b. chosen from among alternatives.
- c. chosen after due reflection.
- d. prized and cherished.
- e. publicly affirmed.
- f. acted upon.
- g. part of a pattern, a repeated action.

According to Simon, anything else that is used as a reference point to guide or strengthen the will is not a value, but a value indicator. A value indicator may be a developing goal or purpose, an aspiration, an attitude or interest; or seen from a slightly different angle,

activities, worries, problems, or obstacles.<sup>1</sup> While values are identifiable reference points, value indicators are only vague contour lines that do not always match reality. The fewer fully developed values one has, the more one is likely to wander through life as if lost in circles, wasting energy and strength, and the more one is likely to quickly give up if faced with serious adversity.

### Dependable Values

Dependable values are those least likely to fail as reference points during times of adversity. They are fully developed values of moral excellence, righteousness, and responsibility. These are often deeply rooted in religious values, family values, ethical values, and military values. The professional values are loyalty to the nation, loyalty to the unit, personal responsibility, and selfless service.<sup>2</sup> The four soldierly values are courage, competence, candor and commitment.<sup>3</sup>

Loyalty to the ideals of the nation has historically provided the justification for the use of military power. Democracy, free enterprise, and freedom of religion, are illustrative of national ideals. Liberty is the most central to the idealism of the nation. For a nation founded on liberty, liberty has traditionally motivated and vindicated the call to arms. As early as March 1775, in a meeting of the Virginia legislature at St. John's Episcopal Church, Richmond, a young lawyer named Patrick Henry declared, "I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death." The Liberty Bell in Philadelphia bears the inscription: "Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land unto All the Inhabitants Thereof." (*Leviticus 25:10*) The national ideal of liberty was most recently commemorated with the rededication of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor.

The unpopular military conflicts of the past have been those in which the political leaders were unable to justify military action on the grounds of guaranteeing liberty for ourselves or for our allies. Without this justification, on the grounds of national values, there is no steady direction or mobilization of the national will to win. This is not to say, of course, that soldiers are excused from fighting while a national conflict of values is resolved or a declaration of war is made by congress. In those circumstances, combatants must rely all the more on the soldierly values of courage, competence, candor and commitment to sustain their will.

Not all fully developed values are dependable values. In the face of adversity, some values prove feeble as reference points to

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Sidney B. Simon, *Meeting Yourself Halfway*, (Niles, Illinois: Argus Communications, 1974), p. XIV-XV.

<sup>2</sup> FM 22-100, *Military Leadership*, (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1983), p. 86-89.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90-91.

guide and strengthen the will. The lesser values of material possessions and wealth fail. They are subject to the wanton destruction by the forces of man and nature. In the stock market crash of 1929, many people who used the value of wealth as a significant reference point to guide and strengthen their will despaired and committed suicide. Athletic ability, personal appearance, and other transitory physical qualities fail as reference points. When one is dismembered or disfigured by the violence of combat or rendered nearly helpless as a POW, these values are evidently pointless. The values of fame, glory, and popularity fail during times of adversity because they depend on the perceptions of others. Persons are able to self authenticate their own integrity and worth by being true to the reliable values of moral excellence, righteousness, and responsibility which stand regardless of the perception of others.

## **Values Without Conflict**

Studies in value formation have shown that values are fairly well developed by the age of ten. These values, however, need to be placed in a priority that forms a congruent system of values. Without a principle for establish priority, value conflicts (which weaken the will) cannot be resolved and lead to misdirection and immobilization of efforts. A priority of values deconflicts the competing reference points that guide and strengthen the will on the journey through life. The principle of organization that is most often used is an understanding of the highest good.

Two types of value conflicts arise. One conflict is between two or more mutually held personal values. The other is between a personal value and a social or organizational value. When World War I broke out, Alvin C. York applied for conscientious objector status based on personal religious values. He reported for duty when drafted, but his religious beliefs remained unchanged. He did not believe he should fight or kill enemy soldiers. Until Alvin C. York could resolve the conflict of two mutually held personal values of duty to God and duty to country, his will was immobilized and he could not help his unit perform its mission.

His battalion commander, who also held deep personal religious values, counselled with the young soldier and sent York home on leave to reevaluate his beliefs. After two weeks of soul-searching, York resolved his value conflict with an understanding that the highest good for him was the “moral rightness” of fighting in a just war to prevent the greater evil. He rejoined his unit and his personal values, now without conflict, allowed him to give himself to his duty. Sometime later in a small unit action in the Argonne Forest in France, York distinguished himself during a four-hour period by

killing 25 enemy soldiers, putting 35 machine guns out of action, and taking 132 prisoners.<sup>4</sup>

When personal values are in the wrong priority, they tend to come into conflict with the social and organizational values of the Army. When the value of financial gain is seen as the highest good, for example, individuals behave as mercenaries, rather than soldiers. The personal value of financial gain is behind drug dealing, the stealing and selling of military equipment, and the selling of military secrets. The value of personal financial gain conflicts with the professional values of loyalty to the ideals of the nation, loyalty to the unit, personal responsibility and selfless service.

During times of duress when personal values and the professional values conflict, personal values and the beliefs they support may be reevaluated and changed. Those who do not adjust their personal values to harmonize with the professional and soldierly values of the Army often become discipline problems and require elimination from the service.

When people think and act contrary to their own priority of values, guilt, shame, and anxiety often result. Since such feelings of guilt, shame, and anxiety weaken the strength of the will, they need to be dealt with through admitting the shortcomings, asking forgiveness of those who have been harmed, and by receiving forgiveness when offered. While feelings of guilt, shame and anxiety may be suppressed or ignored during the normal routines of life, when one faces adversity, these feelings may foster inappropriate and perplexing responses.<sup>5</sup>

## **Relationships**

In times of adversity everybody needs someone. Helping associates come from holistic relationships. All holistic relationships are based on respect for individual self-worth and dignity, trust, care, and a willingness to forgive. Holistic relationships have to be developed with family members, unit members, and with God as understood by the soldier, to gain the sense of belonging necessary for the strengthening of the will. These holistic relationships with family members and with unit members and with God give meaning to acts of sacrifice in battle and to personal survival if taken as a POW or wounded.

Holistic relationships are needed, also, to humanize soldiers in the inhuman business of war. Colonel Joshua L. Chamberlain led his 358 soldiers of the 20th Maine Regiment at Gettysburg in the fight

<sup>4</sup> Bruce Jacobs, *Heros of the Army*, (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1956), p. 66-67.

<sup>5</sup> Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, (New York: Harker and Row, Pub., 1954), p. 208.

for Little Round Top on 2 July 1863 against the Alabama 15th and 49th Regiments in one of the greatest small unit actions in history. Their actions influenced the fate of the Civil War and the nation. Colonel Chamberlain would not have talked in terms of holistic relationships with his soldiers; he set the example for them.

One month before the battle, one hundred and twenty mutineers from the 2d Maine Regiment were brought to his unit by guards with fixed bayonets. The mutineers were attached as replacements. If they did not do their duty in the new assignment, Colonel Chamberlain was authorized to shoot them. After finding out the cause of their mutiny, Colonel Chamberlain received permission to handle the situation as they saw fit.

Since they had not eaten in three days, he first fed them. Then he removed their guards and promised to look into their case. He assigned them to different companies, and asked only that they do their duty as soldiers. Before the war, as a seminary student and as a professor of writing and language, Chamberlain had learned the basics of holistic relationships.<sup>6</sup>

Coming into battle for Little Round Top, the 20th Maine had marched more than one hundred miles in five days. Without rest, they moved into defensive positions to secure the left of the Union lines. Six times the Alabama Regiments charged. Colonel Chamberlain, knowing his men were out of ammunition and that to withdraw would cause the defeat of the Union Army, gave the order for a fixed bayonet charge down the hill into the Confederates before they could form their own attack. The surprise and violence of the attack forced the withdrawal of the Alabama Regiments and the rest of the Confederate forces under General Lee from the field of battle. Without the contribution of the replacements, the 20th Maine could not have prevailed.

Following the example of Colonel Chamberlain, the soldiers of the 20th Maine expressed holistic relationships toward each other. At Little Round Top the unit suffered 90 casualties out of 359 riflemen. Forty were killed or died of wounds. Regardless of the danger, however, the wounded were evacuated because each soldier cared for another.<sup>7</sup>

It is well to have what I call a holistic relationship even with the enemy. In this case holistic relationship means a respect for their worth as human beings and a willingness to forgive. General Custer's egotism, for example, in not respecting the worth of the Sioux, underestimated their capabilities and overestimated his own. This lack of respect lead to the destruction of his command.

<sup>6</sup> John J. Puller, *The Twentieth Maine*, (Dayton, Ohio: Press of Morningside Bookshop, 1980), p. 77-80.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 90-120.

## Goals

Those who seem best able to mobilize the resources of the will to live productive lives after suffering—POWs or the wounded—are those who put their past behind them by forgiving those responsible for their misfortune. When there is a residue of anger, hate, and bitterness, it hinders the maintenance and formation of needed helping holistic relationships.

Positive goal-oriented behavior patterns, using Maslow's hierarchy of needs, is behavior oriented toward self-actualization. Even within the limits of an adverse situation, individuals are free to choose how they will respond in attitude and behavior.

Viktor E. Frankel, the author of *Man's Search for Meaning*, was a survivor of the Nazi concentration camps in World War II. He discovered that within the brutal, uncivilized restraints of confinement, he could choose to either look for beauty in a sunrise and sunset or devote his attention to the ugliness of man's inhumanity to man. He chose to maintain a positive attitude toward life by focusing his attention on things of beauty.

Positive goal oriented behavior develops from a positive attitude. Negative behavior patterns use the limits as excuses for failure and nonachievement rather than as challenges or stepping stones to achieve goals. It is the achievement of past goals that builds the confidence to set and achieve new goals.

Bonnie Lee St. John was born female, black, and handicapped; a birth defect resulted in a loss of a leg at age five. Against odds which would seem to make achievements highly improbable, if not impossible, she became a champion athlete and scholar. As a member of the U.S. Handicapped Olympics Ski Team, at twenty-one she won two bronze medals for the slalom and giant slalom at the Winter Olympics in Innsbruck, Austria, and a silver medal as the second fastest woman handicapped skier in the world. As a senior at Harvard, she received the coveted Rhodes scholarship to attend Oxford University in England. "Nothing else has ever meant so much to me in my life," she said of the Rhodes scholarship. "The Olympics represented the end of a lot of hard work. The Rhodes is the beginning of a new challenge; it's changed my horizons."<sup>8</sup>

The American prisoners of war in North Vietnam were subject to starvation, disease, torture, and death by a regime determined to break them in mind and spirit. Rather than accepting those limits, they accepted the challenge and set goals for winning the contest of will. For seven and a half years Navy Commander Jeremiah A. Denton was a POW. At a press conference, the enemy took him before foreign reporters. He used the occasion to get a message to the

<sup>8</sup> Bill Rhoden, "Where There's a Will . . .", *Essence*, (New York: Essence Communications, Inc., May 1986), p. 88-94.

outside world. He used Morse Code to blink out the word *TORTURE*. About three years later he wrote an Easter poem to strengthen his will and the will of other prisoners as they looked for a sign for the end of the war and their eventual release.<sup>9</sup>

As the end of the war drew closer and as a result of the Son Tay raid, the American prisoners were united in one central camp. Over the objections of their captors they conducted Sunday religious and patriotic services. They formed their own choir, appointed their own chaplain, and established an order of worship including the opening prayer, scripture reading, benediction, and the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner." Some created a "Living Bible" reconstructed from verses memorized years before. Despite separation from the leaders and efforts by their captors to end the services, the services continued to the end of their captivity. When they landed on their native soil, the choir sang the "Lord's Prayer."<sup>10</sup>

The values which sustain and the problems which face today's soldier and today's Army are not always new. For example, drug abuse in the American Army is certainly no new thing. The reason drug and alcohol abuse cannot be tolerated personally or professionally is because the abuse weakens the will by undermining values, destroying holistic relationships, and hinders goal oriented behavior patterns. As early as the American Revolution, General Washington requested that Pennsylvania military be kept at a distance from the Continental Army because he didn't want their lax discipline in drinking and other manners to undermine the discipline of his soldiers. While he did not oppose the moderate use of alcohol, he maintained, "There cannot be a greater failure in soldiers than drunkeness."

## **Discussion Of Will By Keynote Speakers**

### **Discussion Guide**

Using this working definition on the meaning and importance of the will, two keynote speakers, with their spouses when available, personalize the definition from their experiences. The speakers are chosen for their having received near fatal wounds in combat or for having been a POW/MIA.

Each speaker is asked to use the following guide:

1. Tell your story as it relates to the will.
2. What do you believe were the elements of your life before combat which contributed to the strength of your will to survive?

<sup>9</sup> Jeremiah A. Denton Jr., *When Hell Was in Session*, (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1976), p. 163-164.

<sup>10</sup> Robinson Risner, *The Passing of the Night*, (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 215-222.

3. How can soldiers and wives best prepare to survive, if they should find themselves in circumstances such as yours?

4. Why do some soldiers seem to experience a weakness of will in similar circumstances and how could they overcome the weakness?

5. What were the greatest challenges to the strength of your will?

6. What are your feelings now toward your country, the military, your family, and former enemies?

The morning session on the will is concluded with a question and answer period moderated by the unit chaplain. Questions tend to range from those concerned with the technical make, caliber, and range of weapons causing injury to those dealing with thoughts and feelings about pain and death.

## **Afternoon Sessions On Faith**

The afternoon session is used to enhance faith. After lunch the battalion commander makes the opening remarks to the unit, followed by a speaker who develops a working definition of the meaning and importance of faith.

### **Believing**

Believing in a source of strength more powerful than the problem is the necessary starting point for an abiding hope that will support and sustain the will in seemingly hopeless situations. It may be faith in self, fellow soldiers, equipment, or in the country. For many Americans an important source of strength is belief in a personal God.

In the earliest days of our history as a nation, the leaders in the War for Independence recognized the necessity for the protection of Divine Providence in the struggle for liberty. On 12 June 1775, the Continental Congress dispatched messengers to each of the thirteen colonies with a resolution for a universal "day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer." The colonists were asked to confess their sins, plead for forgiveness, and entreat the great "Governor" to remove the calamities and avert the "desolating judgment" which threatened their existence.

The "protection of Divine Providence" was again sought in the Declaration of Independence in order to secure "certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." These rights are both "self-evident" and "endowed" to all by the Creator. The continued reliance on the "protection of Divine Providence" for our nation is reaffirmed in the "pledge of allegiance to the flag and to the country for which it stands," with

the words, “one nation under God, with liberty and justice for all.” The national currency proclaims “In God We Trust.”

General Marshall stated, “It’s morale—and I mean spiritual morale—which wins the victory in the ultimate, and that type of morale can only come out of the religious nature of a soldier who knows a God and who has the spirit of religious fervor in his soul. I count heavily on that type of man and that kind of Army.”<sup>11</sup>

## Seeing

The vision of victory based on a belief in a source of strength greater than the problem gives realistic direction to mobilize the resources of the will toward goal oriented behavior. The victory may be the defeat of the enemy, honorable surrender, or death. To lose a vision of victory is to be demoralized in the face of adversity. To maintain a vision of victory is never to be vanquished by any enemy, obstacle, problem, or circumstance.

In the autumn of 1777 during the American War of Independence the Continental Army under the leadership of General Washington suffered a series of major reversals. The British force had driven them from New York, defeated them at Brandywine and Germantown, and occupied the American capitol at Philadelphia. General Washington could have chosen to surrender or resign. Washington, however, chose to lead his 11,000 Regulars to take winter quarters at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania from Dec 1777 to June 1778. During that terrible winter, the number of ragged and half-starved troops dwindled through death and desertion, and the remaining 6,000 men talked of mutiny. Meanwhile three other generals were openly politicking with Congress for his job. A secret vote by Congress failed by only one vote to arrest him.

In spite of adversity, General Washington steadfastly refused to accept anything but victory. He shared the dangers and hardships of his soldiers and set the example by his prayers, personal bravery, and attention to duty. Rather than waste energy defending himself from criticism, he used the winter months to transform his remaining soldiers into a tough, disciplined fighting force. From Valley Forge he marched his army out to engage the British forces as they withdrew from Philadelphia to New York. He continued to engage the British until six years later on 19 October 1783, final victory came with the surrender of the British forces at Yorktown, Virginia, to a large American-French army under his command.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> David B. Jorgensen, *The Service of Chaplains to Army Air Units 1917-1946*, (Washington D. C.: Office Chief of Air Force Chaplains, 1961), p. 277.

<sup>12</sup> Holmes M. Alexander, *Washington and Lee: A Study in the Will to Win*, (Belmont, Massachusetts: Western Islands, Pub., 1967), p. 37-51.

## Communicating

Communicating faith through prayers, songs of hope, words of encouragement, and other symbolic actions renews belief in a source of strength more powerful than the problem at hand and provides a vision of victory while still in adversity. Soldiers who can communicate faith in adversity not only renew their own faith but strengthen the faith of others. A faith communicated is a faith strengthened.

In World War II General George A. Patton distributed to every man in his command a prayer for good weather. "We've got to get not only the chaplains but every man in the Third Army to pray. We must ask God to stop these rains. These rains are the margin that holds defeat or victory." The prayer, in the act of its offering, strengthened the will and faith of the men and women who said it.

The prayer read:

Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly beseech Thee,  
of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have to contend. Grant us fair weather for Battle. Graciously harken to us soldiers who call upon Thee  
that, armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to  
to victory, and crush the oppression and wickedness of our  
enemy, and establish Thy justice among men and nations.  
Amen <sup>13</sup>

The effect of faith as communicated from one person to another, evidently depends to some degree upon the disposition of the person hearing the word of faith. An interesting study of this phenomenon comes from the world of medicine. After studying the behavioral interaction between meditation and health, cardiologist Dr. Herbert Benson, the head of behavioral medicine at Boston's Beth Israel Hospital and author of *The Relaxation Response*, found that meditation simply does not work for those patients who do not believe in meditation. He also discovered a profound influence on the healing of the body for those patients who believe in the efficacy of meditation. A critical element in healing is faith, and faith is renewed by meditation, prayer and medication.

For years medicine has known the placebo effect. If a patient believes that a surgical procedure, or a cure, or a pill will help, even if physiologically there is no direct relation to the patient's condition, the mental disposition will positively influence the healing of the

<sup>13</sup> James H. O'Neill, *The True Story of the Patton Prayer*, (Washington, D. C.: US Government Printing Office, 1950), p. 2.

body. People often credit all sorts of "cures" for cancer: herbal tea, laughter, laetrile, medication and meditation, and faith healing. The key ingredient often not mentioned is faith exercised in what the patient believes will cure. According to Dr. Benson, in 75% of ailments, drugs and surgery are not effective by themselves. Healing requires the power of faith working hand in hand with medicine to bring about recovery.<sup>14</sup>

The "faith factor," as Dr. Benson terms it, can be critical for our well being. In each war America has fought there have been more casualties from disease than from battle and non-battle injuries combined. In Vietnam 20% of the casualties resulted from battle injuries, 17% of the casualties were non-battle related injuries, for a total of 37% of our casualties. If we take Dr. Benson's finding that the exercise of faith is critical in the recovery of 75% of all ailments, the "faith factor" would have been critical in the course of recovery for 47% of our total casualties in Vietnam.

Studies of gas victims in World War I found that for every soldier who suffered the effects of mustard gas, two soldiers were incapacitated by psychosomatic symptoms alone. There were two cases where whole units suffered what was then called mania. Given the lethal character of the modern battlefield, the failure to exercise faith leaves soldiers vulnerable to incapacitating psychosomatic symptoms from what may be termed, in a parallel way, chemical or radiation mania.

The use of appropriate symbols helps to exercise faith. General Douglas MacArthur observed, "Throughout the history of mankind, symbols have exerted an impelling influence upon the lives of men. The cross and flag are embodiments of our ideals and teach us not only how to live but how to die".<sup>15</sup>

The chaplain, for example, is a "living faith symbol." The presence of the chaplain does not so much bring faith to soldiers as it draws out and affirms the faith that is already there. While the chaplain is a living faith symbol, the chaplain's good word, in sermons, in counseling and in conversation, sustains the faith of soldiers.

If drug and alcohol abuse are primary enemies of the will, a parallel and primary enemy of faith is chronic doubting. The practical ground of personal faith is truth, as understood and held by the individual. Chronic doubting is a condition of always questioning and negating truth while never finding it. In undermining faith it creates ambiguity of beliefs leading to feelings of uncertainty and insecurity, and in times of duress to hopelessness. While chronic doubting is impotent; reflective doubting is invigorating. Reflective

<sup>14</sup> William Proctor, "Beating Illness With the Faith Factor", *Prevention*, (Emmaus, Pa.: Rodale Press, Inc., May 1984), p. 24-26.

<sup>15</sup> Jorgensen, *The Service of Chaplains to Army Air Units 1917-1946*, p. 277.

doubting is an important part of the process for developing a mature, genuine faith through questioning, testing, and evaluating truth. Reflective doubting wishes to know the truth; chronic doubting wishes to negate the truth.

As Augustine framed it, “Everyone who knows that he is in doubt about something knows the truth, and in regard to this he is certain.” (*The True Religion* XXIX.73) Such reflective doubting discovers and refines truth rather than only negating it. A reliable faith is seasoned with questions, matured by tests, and strengthened by regular evaluation.

## **Discussion Of Faith By Keynote Speakers**

### **Discussion Guide**

Using this working definition of the meaning and importance of faith, the two keynote speakers and their spouses share again how faith relates to their experience.

1. Tell your story as it relates to your faith.
2. Describe the development of your faith and how it helped you to overcome adversity.
3. What have been the challenges to your faith?
4. In the face of adversity, have you considered giving up?
5. How did you see faith or the lack of faith make a difference in those suffering under similar adversity?
6. How can soldiers and their spouses prepare in terms of faith to deal with adversity in the future?

### **Wrapup**

The afternoon session concludes with a question and answer session. The unit chaplain moderates the questions from the soldiers. Typically their questions can range from those concerned with how chaplains do combat ministry to those concerned with how they can strengthen their own faith to combat fear.

## **B-TIP Workbook**

The follow up to the all day workshop is small group sharing to mutually reinforce will and faith at the squad level. The basis for this sharing is the previous discussion during the workshop and a “Battleproofing the Inner Person” workbook provided to each soldier. The workbook provides four historical situations dealing with the function of will and four historical situations dealing with the function of faith. The situations are followed by questions raised by each situation for group sharing. A copy of the workbook, as used in the B-TIP program at Fort Hood, follows this article.

## **Speakers**

The following speakers have shared from their experiences on will and faith in the seven B-TIP program conducted at Fort Hood.

MG Robert Taylor, Ret., former Air Force Chief of Chaplains and survivor of the Bataan "Death March" and prisoner of war.

BG Robinson Risner, Ret, former Air Force pilot and POW in Vietnam for seven years.

CH (COL) Clayton Day, Ret, former Army chaplain. He was a MIA in Korea and served three tours in Vietnam.

Mr. Paul Carter. He was medically discharged after suffering near fatal wounds in Vietnam as an Army chaplain.

Mr. David Roever. He was a Navy SEAL who was medically discharged after suffering near fatal wounds in Vietnam.

## **Evaluation**

The soldiers who participate in the seminar are given an evaluation sheet in the back of the B-TIP workbook. The tabulation of the enlisted soldiers' responses indicate 77% believe that their will and faith was made stronger by the B-TIP seminar. There were 48% who said they would seek ways to intentionally strengthen their will and faith. There were 24% who indicated they would seek ways to strengthen the will and faith of other soldiers.

The response of the officers to the B-TIP program has generally been more positive than those of the enlisted soldiers. Officers' responses indicate 88% believe their will is stronger and 84% believe their faith is stronger because of the experience. There were 32% who said they would seek ways to strengthen the will and faith of other soldiers. Most soldiers have asked on their evaluation sheets for additional workshops dealing in more detail with the ingredients of will and faith.

# **Battleproofing The Inner Person: A Will And Faith Workbook**

**Thomas Mitchiner**

**Bibliographical Research: Chaplain (2LT) Stephen D. Kelly**

## **TESTING THE WILL**

### **Characteristics of Will**

The various definitions of will give an indication of its complexity. Webster defines will as “the power of making a reasoned choice or of controlling one’s own action.” Others see will as a conscious decision to act or to undertake a course of action. Another approach defines will in terms of one’s capacity for voluntary activity which entails the ability to hold in check certain impulses and to release others. Wundt in his book, *Introduction to Psychology* (1912), conceived of will as a dynamic structure basic to the function of psychic existence. Perhaps the multifaceted character of will is best reflected in Lewin’s definition.

Willing is not a uniform process but a name for many different processes such as decision, determination, self-discipline, the delineation of self from the outside world, concentration, and perseverance.<sup>1</sup>

When considering these definitions together, they suggest that will is a dynamic force. The terms “activity,” “action,” and “power,” are recurring elements in the above definitions. Consequently, will should not be thought of as a noun, but as a verb. The idea of choice also appears in these definitions. Phrases like “voluntary activity,” “conscious decision,” and “reasoned choice,” suggest

<sup>1</sup> *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, s.v. “Will.” Also see *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, s.v. “Will,” and James N. Lapsley, ed., *The Concept of Willing* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), p. 40.

that will is not a reflex but a product of reason and reflection. Finally, the definitions suggest that will acts much like a governor on an engine. It channels the flow of energy toward a particular course of action while inhibiting the flow into other areas. Will is the dynamic force enabling us to choose a particular course of action leading to the fulfillment of a goal.

## Function and Source

In terms of function, psychologists have centered their investigation on the dynamic aspect of will. Mierke discovered that will is a genuine force, having the capacity to convert potential into kinetic energy. According to Wellek, will has the capability to mobilize ability and achievement energy for short-term or long-term activity.<sup>2</sup> Thus, will is not merely the realization of ideals that give direction to life, but a force that converts energy into objective-achieving activity.

The studies by Mierke and Wellek were based in part upon research carried out by Ach and Lewin during the first quarter of the twentieth century. In a series of experiments, the findings of which are contained in *Ueber den Willensakt und das Temperament*, Ach describes five characteristics of will.

1. In some acts of willing there is a subjective feeling of strong tension, generally accompanied by body sensations especially of skeletal musculature: there is (literally) a “jerk” of the will.
2. There is an awareness of intentionality, usually accompanied by an image of the goal, or of inner speech? “I must . . . ,” “now I have to . . . ,” “I am going to . . . ” It is often accompanied by a feeling of power or capacity; “I can . . . ”
3. There is a high awareness of actuality, an experience of “I will” with the emphasis on the “I” that does the willing.
4. There is a consciousness of goal and instruments.
5. There is a consciousness of effort and difficulty.

Ach went on to observe that even the most energetic act of will does not always achieve its intended goal. The attainment of a particular goal is subject to modifying influences such as strength of determination, strength of barriers or resistance, and the difficulty of the task at large.<sup>3</sup>

Lewin maintains that willing involves more than mere perception. It involves “effort, selection, and real tension between present reality and fulfillment of the anticipated goal.” Willing requires work and not merely an inner seeing. Moreover, he agrees with Ach that the surrounding environment effects will.

<sup>2</sup> EP

<sup>3</sup> Lapsley

Will involves an awareness of the distance to be traversed, not by a mere forward glance but by a moving, straining body, exposed to distraction and counter impulses, subject to goal gradients and liable to the phenomenon of “giving up” or exhaustion, in a changing situational context.<sup>4</sup>

In summary, willing is a complex, dynamic, mental function that involves several related factors: a reasoned intention to achieve the goal, the conversion of energy and organization of skills needed to achieve the goal, and the awareness of the difficulty of the task.

Ziehen and Meumann, psychologists who have examined the sources of will, conducted empirical investigations and concluded that will is derived from ideas and thought processes. Ebbinghaus demonstrated that elementary emotions were a source for will. Alport and Lewin were convinced that will proceeded from conscious, volitional motives.<sup>5</sup>

Lewin's study revealed that the phenomenon of “I will” is most clearly seen when the individual is faced with an inner or outer obstacle. Thus, a strong source of will may be a challenge which serves as a catalyst to set the willing process in motion.<sup>6</sup>

Ach discovered several ways in which acts of the will can be reinforced. Habits, “preservation of related tendencies,” and “favorable associations enhancing the value of the goal,” are ways that will can be positively reinforced. However, the greatest asset to the reinforcement of will is a specific goal. According to Ach, the “specificity or relative narrowness of the determination” greatly enhances the strength of will.<sup>7</sup>

The educational psychologist Piaget theorized that will is closely associated with values. He argued that to have will is to have a permanent scale of values. Not having will means just the opposite. The permanent scale of values serves as a standard by which will conflicts can be resolved. For Piaget, a strong will and a strong set of permanent values were seen to be inseparable.<sup>8</sup>

## Strength and Weakness

Will gives one the ability to achieve goals that are considered worthy. Ach has shown by experimentation that will indicates a

<sup>4</sup> EP

<sup>5</sup> Lapsley, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 40. The studies of Lewin, Vorsatz, *Wille und Bedürfnis*, Psy. Forsch., 1920, 7, pp. 330-86; Meumann *Intelligenz und Wille* (Leipzig, 1908); Mierke, *Wille und Leistung* (Göttingen, 1955) remain untranslated.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 43-44.

special energy potential that is able to conquer strong opposing forces such as fatigue and personal inhibitions.

Despite its obvious strengths, will is subject to several weaknesses. Alfred Adler maintains that although a weak will may be innate or acquired, through education or psychotherapy the will can be strengthened. Gwynneth Matthews in his essay "Weakness of Will," list several common weaknesses that deplete the strength of will.

1. Procrastination. Matthews refers to this tendency as "putting off the evil moment." A dental appointment, for example, may be needed. Because of the prospect of pain, one delays the inevitable visit.

2. Retrogression. One makes a resolution that he fully intends to keep, but then fails to fulfill the resolution.

3. Irresolution. A person makes a decision, but then begins to second guess himself.

4. Persuasion. An individual finds that another has convinced him to change his mind.

5. Discouragement. Difficulty, hardship, and threatening circumstances cause one to change his course of action.

6. Inability to carry out a decision.

7. Inability to resist temptation.

8. Inability to control anger.<sup>9</sup>

Matthews notes that all of the above weaknesses of will could also be classified as moral weaknesses. If this is the case, then it follows that strong moral values are important to the strength of the will.

## **Sustaining The Will (Testing The Will)**

Following the devastating air attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, that destroyed the United States Pacific Fleet, the Japanese launched their invasion of the Philippines. The American and Filipino soldiers were badly outnumbered, poorly supplied, and crippled by starvation and disease, but they managed to fight a holding action on the Bataan Peninsula for four months. In the spring of 1942, the Japanese 14th Army overran the Bataan Peninsula capturing 78,100 American and Filipino troops. One of the Americans captured was Cpt. John S. Coleman, an Army Air Corps officer assigned to a materiel squadron.

Captain Coleman was one of the 60,000 captured troops that started the 70 mile death march in which the enemy either shot or bayoneted any one falling out of rank. Approximately 10,000 captured soldiers did not survive the march. Captain

<sup>9</sup> Geoffrey Mortimore, ed., *Weakness of Will* (London: Macmillian, 1971), pp. 162-65.

Coleman suffered several shrapnel wounds to the left leg and fell out of the march, but still survived. He told his captor, "I have something to live for."

I think we were somewhere between Hermosa and Lubao on a gravel road, and it was about eleven o'clock when my knees just would not work. I was pulling too heavily on the belt of the man in front of me. He didn't complain, but did all he could to help me keep going. I became numb all over. I could see ahead about a quarter of a mile. There were two or three nipa huts with some shade trees. I was going to try to make it to those shade trees, but I fell down in the column. The soldier that I was holding on to got me by the hair on my head and said "Come on. Try to make it. It's just a little further." My knees buckled. Two men tried to carry me with my arms around their necks. I could not move my legs to help them. They were falling behind in the march and I asked them to let me go. I did not want them to get killed trying to help me. I pulled myself from them and fell on my knees on the gravel road with my hands beneath my forehead. I could hear the crunching sound of the gravel from the shoes marching by me. I tried to rise up again and I saw a Japanese officer with boots on, some thirty feet ahead and a guard running at me with a bayonet. The officer shouted something at him. The guard just jabbed me and did not follow through with it as though he were really trying to kill me. I felt the grinding of bones and a streak of fire in my right side. I passed out. Then I had a dream or vision. Evidently I thought I was dying. I saw my wife, Ethel, in tears, saying, "Don't leave me with these children." Then my daughter, Lennie Lou, who was ten years old when I left the states, appeared in a light blue dress, with her hair done up in pigtails. Tears like dew drops were running down her cheeks. She said, "Daddy, don't leave me." Then my son appeared. He had his two front teeth out, just as I had left him (he was six years old) and in an excited tone, he said, "Daddy, don't leave us." Each of them appeared one at a time. I could see them from the waist up and they seemed very close to me.

When Captain Coleman regained consciousness he was about one quarter of a mile from where he had fallen out. After being bayoneted, he was placed by a

pile of dead bodies. Rosary beads were on the chest of the dead Catholic chaplain next to him. He managed to get up and find some water for his canteen. Bloody bubbles of air were coming out of his wounded side when he drew a breath. Later other Japanese soldiers marched him back to the prisoner column from which he had fallen out earlier that day.

At Camp O'Donnell things were worse. No less than fifty soldiers died every day. It was not uncommon for a soldier to be on a burial detachment one day and to be buried the next. Most died from dysentery, but some were brutally executed by the Japanese. [The executions included officers and enlisted alike.] Captain Coleman was eventually packed into the hold of an unmarked transport ship with other POWs. After surviving the weather and physical deprivation, he arrived in Japan to spend the duration of the war doing slave labor.

At the end of the war, Captain Coleman was sent to Brooke General Hospital in San Antonio, Texas, from which he retired. The doctors said that given his physical condition he might live five years. Instead he went on to take a second retirement as co-ordinator of veterans' schools in Collingsworth County, Texas. Later he became active in all types of community affairs, and this interest resulted in his serving for six years as mayor of Wellington, Texas. Captain Coleman, when reflecting on his experience, often said he would gladly serve his country again if needed.

*Bataan and Beyond*  
John S. Coleman Jr.

## Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. The strength of the will to survive is based on ideas and relationships. Although his country seemed to have forgotten them in the Philippines, Captain Coleman had something for which to live. What do you think Captain Coleman had to live for?
2. Captain Coleman's life was in the balance when he fell to his knees on the death march? What do you think would come into your mind to enforce your will to live if your life, like Captain Coleman's, were hanging in the balance?

3. In spite of the prediction of the doctors that he would only live five years when he was released from active duty in 1947, he went on to live a full complete life as a civilian? Why do you think he was able to do this?

4. How would you react if, after surviving four years of deprivation and brutality as a POW, the doctors only gave you five years to live?

5. Why do you think Captain Coleman could say he would gladly serve his country again after four harsh years as a POW?

## **Commitment To A Goal (Testing The Will)**

While Captain Coleman, like any soldier, had his personal reasons for surviving the war; like our early American forefathers, he fought for his country to secure liberty. The securing of liberty was the goal of the War of Independence. That goal was clearly stated by a young lawyer named Patrick Henry, a member of the legislature of colonial Virginia. In a meeting of the legislature at the St. John's Episcopal Church on a Richmond hilltop in March 1775, he declared, "I know not what course others may take, but as for me give me liberty or give me death."

The next month the first American blood was shed in the securing of American liberty as the Minutemen heeded the summons of Paul Revere and assembled at Wright's Tavern at Lexington, Massachusetts, to meet the arrival of the British. The first person to heed the summons was The Rev. William Emerson. His grandson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, commemorated the stand of the Minutemen in his famous poem, "Concord Hymn."

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,  
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,  
Here once the embattled farmers stood  
And fired the shot heard round the world.

Because of the abuses suffered in the colonies under British rule, armed opposition quickly spread. On July 7, 1776, the members of the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence. The document begins, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." It ends with these words: "And for the support of the Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." To proclaim the Declaration, the Liberty Bell was rung on that day in Philadelphia. The bell bears the inscription, "Proclaim Liberty

Throughout All the Land unto All the Inhabitants Thereof" (Lev. 25:10).

The cause of human liberty was again commemorated in 1886 with the dedication of the Statue of Liberty that commands the entrance to the harbor of New York City. The statue was originally known as *Liberty Enlightening the World*. The goal of securing liberty has been an underlying theme for all our wars since the days of the War of Independence. Most recently it was memorialized by the words of John F. Kennedy when he stated, "We will pay any price, bear any burden, to assure the success of liberty."

## Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Why do you think that Patrick Henry chose to say, "Give me liberty or give me death?" How were the signers of the Declaration of Independence able to pledge their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor in support of the cause?
2. What do you believe are the greatest internal or external threats to the continued liberty of our nation and people?
3. If I were Patrick Henry, I would have . . .
  - a. Said the same thing.
  - b. Thought the same thing, but kept silent so the British would not be after me.
  - c. Rather have lived under British rule than to have died for liberty.
4. What price should we pay to assure American liberty, and what price should we pay to assure the liberty of others?

## Confidence In The Goal (Testing The Will)

In the autumn of 1777 during the American War of Independence the Patriot forces under General Gates won a spectacular victory over the British forces near Saratoga, New York, while at about the same time the Patriot forces under General Charles Lee successfully defended the city of Charlestown, South Carolina. The British, however, were successful in driving the forces of the Continental Army under General Washington from New York, and afterward defeated the American forces at Brandywine and Germantown to occupy the then American capital city of Philadelphia.

General Washington knew that the British would be back on the offense in the spring of 1778. He led his 11,000 Regulars to take winter quarters at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, from December 1777 to June 1778, only 22 miles from Philadelphia and the British, and waited for the spring.

The winter was unusually severe. Food and clothing were inadequate and there was much sickness and suffering. Sometimes half of the troops were unfit for duty for lack of shoes, stockings, shirts, or coats. There were never enough blankets or straw to insulate against the cold, and men frequently ate only primitive cakes of flour and water baked on hot stones. There was gross mismanagement in the commissary and transport department, congressional neglect, and public criticism. The brunt of the criticism was aimed at General Washington.

Everyone, it seemed, had turned against him. Congress had: a friend wrote that a motion in secret mission to arrest him had failed by one vote. The generals had: Conway and Lee were only bidding for his command, and Gates was a willing candidate. Hating his failures, loathing the criticism, Washington became unbearably irascible to those around him. Mrs. Washington, arriving from Mount Vernon, found him looking much older. He was gray and gaunt, a little deaf, a little blind, and was running one of those fevers that always come with frustration.

There was talk that he intended to resign. Many people unquestionably hoped so. And after all why should he not resign? What had he done to deserve any confidence? The relief of Boston had been accomplished by default. The victories at Trenton and Princeton were trifling ones in the first place, and they were stale ones now. They had never been anything to compare with Gates' triumph at Saratoga and Charles Lee's at Charlestown. Finally someone put the question to him and got a direct answer.

"No person ever heard me drop one expression that had a tendency to resignation."

The number of ragged and half-starved troops dwindled through desertion and death. The remaining 6,000 men talked of mutiny. They were held together, however, by their loyalty to Washington and the patriotic cause of liberty. During the winter, Washington didn't waste energy defending himself from criticism. He worked unceasingly to see that his soldiers were paid as well as provided with supplies of food, clothing, arms, medical care, and shelter. He shared the danger and hardship of his soldiers and set an example by his prayers, personal bravery, industry and attention.

Washington knew that if his army were ever to be a match for the British forces, strict discipline was essential. While Washington believed "the benefits arising from the moderate use of

strong liquor have been experienced in all armies and are not to be disputed," he maintained that "there cannot be a greater failure in a soldier than drunkenness" and dealt sternly with all such cases, especially among officers. He even requested that the Pennsylvania militia be kept at a distance from the Continental Army because he feared their lax discipline in drinking and other matters might spread "the seed of licentiousness among the Regulars . . ."

Two distinguished foreigners, Marquis de Lafayette and Baron Fredrick von Steuben shared the misery of the American troops. Steuben, an accomplished German drillmaster, drilled and organized the men. He transformed the loosely jointed army into an integrated force. Steuben worked through interpreters and taught the Americans how to march in a compact mass, to deploy in a discipline line of battle, and how to use their bayonets.

In the late spring of 1778, the Continental Army marched out from Valley Forge to engage General Clinton's British forces on their way from Philadelphia to New York. The Battle of Monmouth should have been a great victory for the toughened soldiers of Valley Forge, but General Washington, Steuben, and Nathanael Greene had to save the Patriot forces from a rout caused by the equivocal behavior of General Lee who had recently taken over command from Lafayette.

For three years the rebellion had stood alone against the empire. The rebel leader had proved, and the proof was even more necessary than showing victories, that his determination was unshakable, his will to win indestructible. At the end of 1775, he had lost his last chance to take Canada. At the end of 1776, he had lost New York and had thus given the British full use of their overwhelming Navy. At the end of 1777, he had lost Philadelphia, and the confidence of his government and of the public.

He could have surrendered in 1776 or resigned in 1777, and the world would have thought it quite inevitable. At almost any time during the three years, he could have failed to rally from a defeat and the rebellion would have died a natural death.

But he did none of these things. He hung on, he fought on, he continued to attack. And now there became discernible one of those world cycles that, as historians have noted before this, only happened to the advantage of men like Washington. It was not the intervention of a liberty loving Providence. Rather it

was a slow coming inevitability. It was the predictable, even the preordained, reward of his tenacity, his staunchness, his aggressiveness, his positive refusal to accept anything but victory.

In May, the same month that Washington struck Clinton, news came from Europe that France had signed an alliance with the United States.

Under the leadership of General Washington, a large American and French Army, with the aid of the French fleet, forced the British forces under Lord Cornwallis to surrender on October 19, 1781, at Yorktown, Virginia. The victory at Yorktown secured American liberty. Among the American general officers who had sought to replace Washington as the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army during the winter of Valley Forge, General Lee had been court martialled, General Conway had lost his command and resigned, and General Gates had been replaced by Nathaniel Green in 1780 after he suffered a disastrous loss at Camden during the Carolina Campaign.

*Washington and Lee: A Study In the Will to Win*  
Holmes M. Alexander

## Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How important do you think the strength of will in leaders is during periods of prolonged deprivation and distress?
2. Do you think that the men at Valley Forge had a clear understanding of why they were fighting and how they could achieve their goal of independence from British rule? Do soldiers need to have a clear conception of the goal of war to strengthen their will to fight?
3. How does a leader best help to maintain the confidence of his soldiers during times of deprivation and distress? Is confidence the same as morale?
4. George Washington had a strategy for defeating the British, but he knew that his cause would require the assistance of the French. Why do you think the men who remained at Valley Forge believed in the ultimate victory of the colonies?
5. What are some of the common attacks on the strength of the will to fight and survive that soldiers experience in war, and what are some ways to overcome those attacks? Is laughter really the best medicine?

6. Washington considered drunkenness to be the greatest failure of a soldier. How do drug and alcohol problems effect moral character?
7. How are individuals and units influenced by the lax discipline of others?
8. How do drug and alcohol problems create a breakdown in the will and ability of a unit or an individual soldier to perform the military mission and survive?

## **Sacrifice For The Goal (Testing The Will)**

Men and women of all races and faiths have made the ultimate sacrifice to secure liberty. It was Crispus Attucks, a black man, who was one of the first to die for American liberty while facing the British in Boston in 1770. The first Jewish American to fall in the War of Independence was Francis Salvador whose tombstone in a South Carolina cemetery reads: "True to his ancient faith, he gave his life for new hopes of human liberty and understanding."

Some sixty six years later, settlers of the American West fought and died for liberty in the Texas War of Independence. In December 1835 Texans revolted against the Mexican rule of Santa Anna and gained control of San Antonio. When Santa Anna approached with an army of 4,000 in February of 1836, some 150 men, under the command of Colonels William Barret Travis and James Bowie held the Alamo, a mission chapel in San Antonio that had been converted to a fortress. As the siege began, Colonel Travis wrote the following letter asking for reinforcements.

### **Commandancy Of The Alamo— Bejar, Feb. 24th, 1836**

To the People of Texas and all Americans in the world, Fellow Citizens and Compatriots. I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continuous Bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours and have not lost a man. The enemy demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken. I have answered the demand with cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the walls. I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism, and everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all despatch. The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily and will no doubt increase two, three, or four thousand in four or five days. If this is

neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of this country. Victory or death.

William Barret Travis,  
Lt. Col. comdt.

The Americans were reinforced by only 32 volunteers from Gonzales who slipped through the Mexican lines while Santa Anna's forces continued to arrive, reaching an estimated total of 6,000. Defying Santa Anna's demand for surrender, the defenders were determined to fight to the finish. On the evening of March 5 Travis realized the garrison was doomed. He paraded his men in single file before him and described their plight. According to a popular account, he drew a line on the ground with his sword and challenged those who wished to remain to cross the line. All but one did so.

In the near-freezing early dawn of Sunday, March 6, Santa Anna gave the order to attack. As his regimental bands played a Moorish march signifying "no quarter," troops bearing scaling ladders and muskets assailed the The Alamo from four sides. Although they suffered appalling losses, the attackers finally carried the walls and overcame the desperate defenders in hand-to-hand fighting in the courtyard and in the buildings.

The thirteen day siege ended with 1,550 casualties suffered by the forces of Santa Anna. William B. Travis, James Bowie, the legendary David Crockett, and some 180 other defenders were dead. It appears that Crockett and two or three other defenders were overpowered at the very end of the siege, executed and mutilated. Author James Atkins Shackford in *David Crockett: The Man and The Legend*, wrote a fitting eulogy:

Too much has been made over the details of how David died at the Alamo. Such details are not important. What is important is that he died as he lived. His life was one of indomitable bravery; his death was a death of intrepid courage. His life was one of wholehearted dedication to his concepts of liberty. He died staking his life against what he regarded as intolerable tyranny. A poor man who had long known the devastating consequences of poverty and who all his life had fought a dedicated fight for the right of the dispossessed to a new opportunity, he died defending a poor and insecure people and proclaiming their rights to participate in the arts of self-government.

The heroic resistance at the Alamo roused the fighting anger of other Texans, who six weeks later under General Houston defeated Santa Anna at San Jacinto. During the fighting Colonel Sidney Sherman reportedly rallied his company of volunteers with the cry, "Remember the Alamo."

### Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Why do you think that men of all races and faiths have felt compelled to fight for liberty?
2. Why do you think the men at the Alamo chose not to surrender but to fight to the finish against hopeless odds?
3. How do you think a permanent set of values helps a person have a strong will?
4. The struggle to secure liberty has often tested the moral character of Americans. What's the relationship between a strong moral character and the willingness to secure liberty with personal sacrifice?

## Investigating Faith

### Characteristics Of Faith

Most writers describes faith as belief. Traditionally, belief is defined in two general categories: implicit and explicit. Implicit belief involves emotions and conviction and is aroused by a complex interplay of ideas or feelings. This type of belief enables us to believe in our sensations, intuitions, and hopes. Implicit belief does not examine the grounds upon which the belief is based, nor does it require that other people share the same grounds for belief. It is by nature subjective and introspective.

Explicit belief proceeds from critical examination. It rises above the uncritical conscious experience of everyday life and evaluates the evidence for or against a proposition. The method of evaluation can be empirical or logical. Reflective judgment based upon existing evidence is the hallmark of explicit belief.<sup>10</sup>

### Function and Source

In his book, *Dimensions of Belief*, Connolly approaches the topic of faith from a somewhat different perspective. He divides belief into the basic categories of human belief and transcendent belief. He

<sup>10</sup> DPP, s.v. "Belief," also EP s.v. "Knowledge and Belief," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, s.v. "Faith."

plays down the role of logical or empirical verification and stresses the subjective element in all belief.<sup>11</sup>

Human belief is understandable within the framework of man and his world. In other words, the content or object of human belief always consists of a reality which is relative, conditional, finite and temporal.<sup>12</sup> Thus, human belief is limited to finite realities in the context of an ever changing environment.

Connolly divided human belief into personal and philosophical human belief. Personal human belief consists of accepting something upon the word of another. When someone tells you what the weather conditions are like outside, you believe and act accordingly. When a teacher explains the particulars of an episode in American history, for example, you take the word of the teacher as truth. In both instances, you accept the word of another without empirical or rational investigation. Personal belief is broken down into three elements. The first element is authority. You believe that the person giving instructions knows the subject and the facts. The second element is knowledge. You accept the authority of this person because you have a personal knowledge of him. The third element is trust. Because you are personally acquainted with the individual, you are convinced that the person is reliable and trustworthy.<sup>13</sup>

Philosophical human belief is the acceptance of a viewpoint about reality which a person chooses as a basis for life. The content of this belief can be simple or complex, ranging from a belief in a few basic values to a complex belief system like humanism, democracy, or communism. Connolly insists that if one believes in these ideas and principles, it is not because of scientific evaluation, but because one believes that they are true and reliable.<sup>14</sup> He also insists that consistent adherence to the ideals and principles of one's philosophical belief system is necessary for a purposeful and happy life.

The extent that one remains faithful to the principles and values of his project and pursues them consistently, his life is meaningful.<sup>15</sup>

Connolly draws two general characteristics of human belief. The decision to believe goes beyond logical, rational demonstration. The nature of human belief does not demand exact empirical verification. Second, human belief involves an unconditional commitment to the values of humanism, democracy or communism. It

<sup>11</sup> John R. Connolly, *Dimensions of Belief and Unbelief* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1980).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

can be inferred that belief is directly proportional to the degree of commitment. There is no belief without commitment.<sup>16</sup>

Connolly's second major category of belief is transcendent belief. Transcendence denotes a level of reality which is not limited by finite reality. Transcendent belief refers to the realization that there are realities which go beyond the limitations of finitude. He thus defines the concept of transcendent belief as "... that form of belief which involves the acceptance of the existence of some type of ultimate, holy, supernatural being or force which is transcendent to men and this world."<sup>17</sup>

This belief in a transcendent reality has been expressed in many different ways throughout history. The Prime Mover of Aristotle, the personal God of Christianity and Judaism, the impersonal God of Deism, and the abstract God of Hindu and Buddhist thought are examples of transcendent belief.

Connolly divides this major category into religious and philosophical transcendent belief. Religious transcendent belief stems from revelation. It is based upon the presupposition that man must have additional light if he is to know and understand the transcendent being. Such illumination comes through dreams, human messengers and written sources. Connolly isolates four characteristics of religious transcendent belief.

1. The believer accepts the objective existence of an ultimate reality.
2. The believer depends upon the ultimate reality for meaning in life.
3. The believer responds in order to maintain a proper relationship with the ultimate reality.
4. There is a social dimension to religious transcendent belief that tends to support and shape the believer's behavior.<sup>18</sup>

Philosophical transcendent belief, on the other hand, affirms that man has the ability to know ultimate reality apart from special revelation. Man already has knowledge of the transcendent, and that knowledge is discoverable by reason.

## **Strength and Weakness**

Several strengths may be singled out when belief is examined in light of Connolly's categories. Personal human belief makes it possible for us to function at the basic levels of daily life. Taking the word of another and acting accordingly without question or

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

investigation is a fundamental function of life. Philosophical human belief allows us to create a broader, discriminating world view.

Weakness in belief appears in two basic areas: credibility and ambiguity. Credibility is vital to personal human belief. If the person in authority is misinformed or untrustworthy, then his information is less likely to be believed and his instructions less likely to be followed. Thus, the greatest threat to personal belief lies in a loss of credibility between the informer and the informed.

Ambiguity of belief is another area of weakness. Unawareness of ambiguity in one's beliefs leads to confused and erratic behavior. In the area of philosophical human belief, one should have a clear concept of values and beliefs that create the personal world view. The person should know, for example, why living is better than dying, why work is better than idleness, and why democracy is better than communism. Ambiguity of transcendent religious or philosophical belief produces an incomplete world view, which can produce subconscious feelings of insecurity.

## **Sustaining Faith (Investigating Faith)**

In Korea and Vietnam American prisoners found the strength to persevere in captivity in their faith. The Crew of the U.S.S. Pueblo, a Navy surveillance ship captured off Korea, put together on scraps of paper their own volume of scriptures while they were captive for months in North Korea.

Those held in Vietnam, some of them longer than any other American prisoners of war, created a "Living Bible," reconstructing it in their minds from verses memorized years before. They appointed their own chaplains and formed a choir that sang the Lord's Prayer when they landed on their native soil.

"Everything else was stripped from us," a POW declared, "and we were left with only our faith." Their attitude was summarized well by Navy Commander Jeremiah A. Denton. "I believe that I can speak for all in saying that we want to be used by God in this way . . . to help Americans find an awareness of fundamentals which we may have somewhat blurred in the past few years at home."

Jeremiah Denton experienced many dramatic moments during the seven and a half years he spent in captivity after being downed during a bombing run over North Vietnam on July 18, 1965. One such moment occurred when the enemy took him before television cameras and called a press conference. In the months prior to this he, like scores of his comrades, had been humiliated, starved, and tortured in the infamous prison they called "Hanoi Hilton." As he blinked against the glare of the floodlights,

he glanced at his questioner, a Japanese reporter, and wondered how he could get his message to the outside world.

It appeared to be a hopeless mission for the prisoner of war, surrounded as he was by his North Vietnamese captors. Denton hesitated, looked into the lights again, and was suddenly struck by an idea. He blinked his eyes slowly, once, then three more times, slowly: A dash, and three more dashes; a quick blink, slow blink . . T . . O . . R . . , a slow blink, pause; two quick ones and a slow one T . . O . . R . . T . . U . . R . . E .

"I don't know what is happening," Denton said in that interview, "but whatever the position of my government is, I support it. I am a member of that government. It is my job to support it, and I will do so as long as I live." As Denton struggled through the years, through countless brutal sessions, through imprisonment in an incredible place the POWs called Alcatraz, through the starving, disease, and death of a Hanoi prison, he, and Americans like him, found the strength to resist a cruel regime determined to break them in their faith.

In the spring of 1968 we celebrated Easter weeks ahead of the rest of the world. We didn't know when it was to fall (April 14 as I discovered many years later) so we guessed and chose a Sunday in March. I said that we should pray for a sign that would deliver us from our long ordeal.

I composed a poem in three stanzas. One stanza I "recited" on Holy Thursday, the second on Good Friday, and the third on Holy Saturday. Almost all of us at Alcatraz had a deep belief in God. Thus, each stanza was eagerly awaited, and the following morning the others would scrape back their comments on my effort.

The poem was titled "The Great Sign." It represented a conversation on Holy Saturday night, about thirty hours after Christ was crucified, among the three women who found the stone rolled back from Christ's tomb on Easter morning.

I made up the first stanza for Joanna, one of the holy women. It went:

His manger birth drew kings in awe,  
His smile the former blind now saw,  
In Him divine and mortal merged,  
Yet He's the one the soldiers scourged.

The second stanza I composed for Mary, the mother of James:

He praised the humble and the meek  
The grateful deaf mute heard Him speak,  
His face was love personified,  
Yet He's the one they crucified.

The third was spoken by Mary Magdalene:

Now our tears with doubts combine,  
How could He die yet be living?  
We must dispel this faithless gloom,  
Let's pray at dawn beside His tomb.

The poem illustrated as well as anything the desperate hopefulness of the prisoners in our dark and lonely cells as we looked for a "Great Sign." And the sign came on April 1, when, early in the morning, Rat flung open the door to my cell and half-shouted: "Denton, we have defeated you! There will be no more bombing! Johnson has quit!"

Using our "180-degree" rationale, we assumed this meant that the North Vietnamese had made a tremendous concession to Johnson, who in turn had ordered a halt to the bombing. We concluded that peace should not be far off. To me, and to many of the others, it was the sign for which we had been looking. It had come too close on the heels of our fervent prayer to be coincidence.

And on February 12, 1973, as the first prisoner to step on free soil, Denton, his faith in God, country, and family unbroken, said "We are honored to have had the opportunity to serve our country in difficult circumstances. We are profoundly grateful to our Commander-in-Chief and to our nation for this day." And with a salute, he said, "God Bless America!"

*When Hell Was In Session*  
Jeremiah A. Denton, Jr.

## **Questions for Reflection and Discussion**

1. What does faith mean for you, and where does it come from? Is it the same thing as hope?
2. How do you live your faith in every day life?
3. In times of duress, how does faith become a resource for survival?
4. In times of duress, how can you sustain the faith of others?

## **Exceeding Personal Limits (Investigating Faith)**

Dave Roever, a Navy seal in Vietnam, should have died from his burns and wounds. As the son of a minister, Dave Roever learned about faith in his childhood. His faith that gave him the courage to undergo fifteen surgeries and provided him with the hope for living a meaningful and fulfilling life.

During river patrol duty, Dave was shot in the hand while holding a phosphorous grenade that he was preparing to throw into an enemy bunker. The grenade exploded six inches from his face, blowing him into the water and sinking the patrol boat on top of him.

He quoted part of a Bible verse to himself, "And to die is gain." Then he recalled the first part of that verse which is "To live is Christ, and to die is gain." The words "to live" gave him the inner assurance that he would live in his Lord's love.

From the waist up he was charred black, and the stench was nauseating. Half of his face was gone. In addition to having lost the fingers of his hand, he had lost an ear, his nose, and was blind in one eye. As the boat rolled off him, he yelled, "God, I still believe in you!" He swam to shore and collapsed. Blood was spurting from a lacerated artery; and if the phosphorous had not burned a hole through his wind pipe, he would have suffocated on his swollen tongue. As the crew members placed him on a stretcher, he heard them saying he was as good as dead.

He was flown to Saigon where he overheard the doctors debating the usefulness of treating him because of the severity of his injuries and the little hope for recovery. Reluctantly they decided to remove the burning phosphorous. He was then sent to Japan where he first saw his facial disfigurement in a mirror. He was still listed in critical condition and contemplating suicide when a missionary friend appeared and prayed for him. During the prayer he fell asleep without medication for the first time. As he slept his heart stabilized, and his respiration and temperature returned to normal. As he slept he dreamed that God was going to put his humpty dumpty body back together again.

From Japan, Dave went to Brook Army Medical Center in San Antonio where he was reunited with his wife. Aware of his scars and disfigurement and feeling like a circus freak, he had to brave the possibility of her rejection of him. His wife, who shared his faith, chose to continue to love him.

Dave Roever tells his story everywhere today. As he has done so, the sight in his blinded eye, as well as his hearing, has been restored. Rather than being embittered by his disfigurement, Dave returned from Vietnam with a stronger faith and with a stronger love for his God and his country.

## **Questions for Reflection and Discussion**

1. In Vietnam, David Roever's faith was challenged at four points. Which do you think would be the greatest challenge to your faith? Why?
  - a. To overhear the crew members and the doctors saying that you were as good as dead?
  - b. To endure the severe pain from the injuries?
  - c. To learn to live with the disfigurement?
  - d. To live with the fear of rejection?
2. Dave's faith was sustained by a verse of scripture and later by the prayer of a missionary. If your life were hanging in the balance as Dave's was what specific words, or prayer, or thoughts might help to sustain you?
3. While faith did not prevent his injuries, it did give Dave a way to cope with them. How can faith make life more meaningful?
4. Dave's religious faith and his faith in our country seem to have been made stronger by his experience in Vietnam. When other soldiers lost their faith and were disillusioned with our country, why did he come back from Vietnam with a stronger faith?

## **Enduring Personal Circumstances (Investigating Faith)**

In December 1979, the United States embassy in Teheran, Iran, was taken over by 400 well drilled militant students chanting "Death to America and Death to the Shah and Carter." In permitting this action the Iranian leader, the Ayatollah Buhollah Khomeine showed total disregard for a fundamental principal of international law which requires the host nation to protect the personnel and property of the embassies in the country. As the squads of attackers moved into the embassy compound, the Marine guards offered only token resistance, firing a few tear gas canisters while staff members shredded sensitive documents. Within three hours, the students had complete control of the compound. The Americans were tied up and blindfolded to be held as hostages for months while long political negotiations went on between Iran and the United States.

After the death of the exiled Shah and the disastrous failure of the U.S. rescue mission, the U.S. and Iran reached an agreement on the exchange of Iranian assets for the release of the hostages. For 444 days the hostages were held under duress in a situation that could only be described as terrifying. Katheryn Koob was one of the hostages held by the militant students.

She speaks of the ordeal in these terms.

I felt from the very beginning that I would go free. I didn't know whether it was going to be five days, five months, or fifteen years, but I was pretty sure I was going to walk away from the place.

Confirmation of her optimism about eventual release came from the Bible. "I received a promise verse," she said, "when my Bible fell open to Psalm 118, verses 17 and 18: 'I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.'" The passage sustained Koob throughout the monotonous days of confinement. While she was confined, Koob said she perceived God as a "a golden column, a pillar of support and strength. My day revolved around that golden column, and I looked to God as the source of everything."

Her early days as a hostage were among the worst, especially the first terrifying 24 hours. "We didn't know what was going on. We were not allowed to speak to anyone [at the embassy] and we had no accurate information about what the militant students wanted." At the time of the takeover on November 4, 1979, Koob was conducting a routine staff meeting at the Iran-America Society which she directed. When the seizure of the embassy was completed, Koob was escorted from the Iran-America Society and held on the embassy compound grounds. She recalls that before most of the other women hostages were released, they were all tied to chairs facing the wall in a large reception area of the ambassador's residence. "We were not allowed to speak to each other . . . and we were not permitted to look at each other."

But Koob had her Bible, and one day she spotted a church hymnal on an embassy bookshelf. The Iranian students gave her the book after she had convinced them the hymnal was not the same as her Bible. Following the release of all the other women, the two remaining captives, Koob and Elizabeth Ann Swift, were separated from one another for four months, and had contact only with their militant caretakers.

"Approximately the second week in December, I suddenly realized that something that had always interested me was the life of the contemplative," Koob recounts. "It's always fascinated me, because I've wondered how people could live a life of silence. So I set up for myself a sort of contemplative order with a schedule of prayers for others and devotions."

She sang hymns to herself, memorized passages of Scripture, and spent time in prayer and meditation. "I tried to remember

there were a lot of people in the world a lot worse off than I was. I was warm and dry and had plenty to eat."

Her exercise of faith was built on a foundation of firm belief that "God gives us the strength to do what he asks us to do." At home in Fairfax County, Virginia, Koob had been active with Lord of Life Lutheran Fellowship (American Lutheran). Koob, then 42, had grown up in a devout family on a 200 acre Iowa farm. She was graduated from Wartburg College, a Lutheran school in Waverly, Iowa. From 1958 to 1960, Koob served as district parish worker for her denomination, assisting nine midwestern parishes in establishing new churches.

A mature faith shaped her attitude throughout the days in Iran. She made no "bargains" with God, but instead would wake up every morning and say, "Thank you for bringing me through the night. You've given me this day and I give it back to you." Taking it one day at a time she recalls, is "the only way you can do it."

"I kept hoping it would go away tomorrow and just kept working on today. That was very, very basic. What I learned when I was small kept me going." One concept learned in childhood was an equanimity about death. The pastor told her when she was young that "When my eyes close in death they open in heaven." Although her certainty about release never left her, she said she was aware of the possibility of death, but felt no fear about it.

When Koob, along with many of the other hostages, appeared on television during a Christmas celebration in 1980, she sang a verse from "Away in a Manger." Since her return, she has been asked many times whether her choice of the third verse, which contains the phrase "Take us to heaven to live with Thee there," indicated a state of depression. "I can't imagine heaven being depressing under any circumstances," she replied. "I just wanted to share a prayer with the world, with the nation, and with my family, with my nieces and nephews."

While depression never gripped her, there were times of frustration and disappointment. "I got discouraged and the waiting got long. I suppose the lowest point was January 1, 1980, and I don't know why. Nothing particular happened. I suspect that perhaps it was because it was New Years, and we'd gone on for a month. It seemed to me that everything had hardened."

In March 1980, she was reunited with Ann Swift, another female hostage. Together they drew special strength from the New Testament promise of *Matthew* 18:20, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them." Koob laughed as she recalled, "We kept reminding him that we were two."

Today Koob recognizes that her treatment was far better than what most of the male hostages received. She believes the student militants "thought they were treating us very well, by their standards." She didn't hesitate to let them know that "we absolutely were appalled by the tactics they were using. But one student told her just before the January 20 release, "We could have treated you a whole lot worse."

The impact of the experience on her spiritual life crystallized for her the importance of religious education at an early age. "Young people should have the opportunity and be required to do memory work," she says. Lay leaders and pastors would do well to make sure that "very basic, simple concepts of religious faith are understood." As she wrote to a nephew in Florida, "Be sure and study your catechism, because you never know when it's going to come in handy."

"How Katheryn Koob's Faith Sustained Her as a Captive"  
Beth Spring  
*Christianity Today*, March 13, 1981

## **Questions for Reflection and Discussion**

1. Kathryn Koob was intentional in strengthening her faith by using a Bible and hymn book. How could you strengthen your faith if a POW or confined to a hospital bed?
2. Because of her faith, Kathryn remained optimistic about her eventual release. How important is an optimistic attitude for survival?
3. Kathryn remained totally committed to her ideals while a hostage. She chose to believe that her life had meaning. How do you find meaning for your life and how would that help you cope with stress of this magnitude?
4. When people give up in a situation of prolonged duress does it mean that there was a failure of faith?

## **Exemplifying Personal Integrity (Investigation Faith)**

Robert Edward Lee served as the commander of the Southern armies during the War Between the States and became a hero of the Confederacy. Lee, who was born into a leading Virginia family, graduated first in his class from the U. S. Military Academy at West Point in 1829. After graduation from the academy, he served as a captain on the staff of General Winfield Scott in the Mexican War (1846-48). In 1861 he refused an offer by General Scott to command a new army being formed to force the Southern states back into the Union.

Lee found himself caught with loyalties to the nation he had faithfully served as a soldier for 35 years and to his native state of Virginia to which he owed a very rich family heritage. In resigning from the Army, he explained his decision in a letter to his sister: "With all my devotion to the Union and with the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, and my home." Before taking command of Virginia's forces, he condemned slavery and freed his own slaves. By the end of the war, he was General-in-Chief of all Confederate armies.

On July 1, 1863, elements of Lee's army met Federals at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. In the three day battle, the casualties on both sides totaled 43,000. Not one of Lee's principle generals performed well. Lee himself was guilty of poor staff work. Some have noted his failure to issue forceful and precise orders, as well as an overeagerness to continue assaulting strong positions manned by superior numbers. Lee assumed all responsibility for the defeat.

Yet during the darkest hours of the war, Lee maintained a cheerfulness and childlike confidence because he relied not on his own strength, but on God. He called on God in prayer and trusted in the promises of his word. "The Holy Scriptures give me light and strength in all perplexities." In private letters, in public documents, in orders to his troops, he recognized God, acknowledged gratitude and invoked his blessing.

Lee's surrender at Appomattox Courthouse April 9, 1865, is commonly viewed as marking the end of the War Between the States. When Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant, he did so without anger. For the first time in 40 years, he was a private citizen. He returned home a paroled prisoner, but with his head held high to receive the cheers such as few victors have heard. Lee was a pious man and practiced his faith daily throughout his life. He declared that he had never held bitter or vindictive feelings against the people of the North, "and have never seen a day when I did not pray for them."

## **Questions for Reflection and Discussion**

1. Lee displayed the virtues of his faith by his conduct throughout the war. How important do you think it was for Lee to assume responsibility for the defeat at Gettysburg? Does faith help us to be honest?
2. Lee prayed for his enemies daily. In what way could your faith reach out to your enemies in war?
3. How did his faith help him to hold his head high and not to be angry or bitter in defeat?

4. How do you think your faith could help you maintain personal integrity if wounded or taken as a POW?
5. How does an active faith serve as an antidote during times of duress to the abuse of alcohol or drugs and to the resulting loss of will to survive?

## Wrap Up Session

- A. Focus on Doubts and Fears.
  1. What are the three most frightening aspects of being taken a POW?
  2. What are the three most frightening aspects of being seriously wounded?
- B. Focus on the Will
  1. From what has been shared, who in your small group do you think could best help you sustain your will to survive if taken a POW?
- C. Focus on Faith
  1. Who in your small group do you think could best help you sustain your belief that your life still has meaning and purpose although you are a POW?
- D. Focus on Intentional Battleproofing of Your Inner Person.
  1. I can best battleproof my inner person by (complete the sentence).
  2. I believe if I were taken a POW or seriously wounded I would (choose one).
    - a. Be ruined mentally or physically for life even if I were to survive.
    - b. Go back on duty if I escaped the enemy and/or recovered from my wounds.
    - c. Give up living because who wants to suffer.
    - d. Get out of the service because I already did my share of suffering.

## Conclusion

Will is a potent force that directs various energies toward the achievement of a specific goal. The strength of the will to withstand fatigue and duress is mobilized by having a clearly defined goal, by making the goal central to a permanent set of values, by confidence in the attainability of the goal, and by having personal reasons for not failing.

Combat stress casualties seem often to suffer a temporary but catastrophic breakdown of the will. Unit cohesion appears to be important to the maintenance of will, but the exact relationship is not understood. Besides such important reasons for not failing

as family ties and personal pride, unit cohesion seems to give a soldier an additional reason for not failing. But its relative worth for strengthening the will alongside such factors as leadership and technical skill has yet to be determined.

Belief and faith can be viewed generally as either implicit and explicit; the former relates to emotion and intuition, and the latter to that which is empirically verifiable. Belief can also be defined in terms of human and transcendent belief. Human belief is limited to the confines of a changing, but finite environment. It enables us to function on a daily basis and provides us with a world view, or perspective for living. Transcendent belief provides an expanded view of reality and gives meaning to finite existence. It gives a sense of ultimate security in the face of adversity and a foundation for hope when there seems to be no basis for hope given the finite environment only.

In the broadest sense, belief serves as a foundation upon which actions of the will are based. It therefore appears that will and belief are interdependent. Belief makes a course of action desirable. Will enables us to follow that course of action and reinforces the reality of the belief. While this degree of interdependence merits further investigation, it is apparent that when a strong will and transcendent belief is present in a soldier, the possibility of overcoming adversity to perform the military mission and his ability to survive is greatly enhanced.

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# **Facing Fear On The Front**

**Thomas H. Paul**

Neither US Army Reserve nor National Guard units have been called to active duty since the Vietnam war. Our *raison d'être*, however, is to be ready for such activation. How does one react when his unit is mobilized? How can a chaplain minister to a young soldier who is called to leave his family, his job, his congregation, his community to face the trauma of combat? How will the chaplain react? How can we as chaplains prepare for this eventuality?

Although no one can predict how he or she will react under these circumstances, the experiences of others may be helpful. This article is the sharing of a personal experience that the writer hopes will be helpful to chaplains who have never been in a combat zone. While wars of the future (Nuclear, Biological, Radiological Warfare) may differ from the Vietnam experience, the psychological and spiritual adjustments will likely be similar. In this reflection, I identify certain emotions that a mobilized soldier may expect to encounter (i.e., fear, insecurity, etc.) and present very personal means of dealing with these emotions. The reason for writing is to encourage chaplains to prepare themselves spiritually and psychologically for mobilization to a combat zone. I write as a chaplain who formerly served as a combat officer with the 101st Airborne Division in the Republic of South Vietnam.

## **"For God and Country"**

It had all seemed so clear back then. Sure, we knew what was happening on other campuses—the flag burnings, draft card destruction, militant demonstrations and the micro-exodus to Canada. But

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that was far from our quiet Southern college with its great oaks reminding us of a century-old tradition of service.

It was 1969 and the nation had reacted against the Tet offensive and was demanding that America get out of Vietnam. Somehow, we continued to discount the message emanating from Berkley . . . after all Californians were considered suspect in the "Bible belt." Most of the male students were enrolled in ROTC in this Presbyterian School, and the Professor of Military Science, recently returned from Vietnam, spoke of the challenge—even the exhilaration—of warfare. He assured us that in no other experience would one feel so totally involved, so alert, so alive! To idealistic Southern boys, this reinforced the tradition we had grown up with. Battle seemed the proper rite of passage into manhood.

Commissioning was a part of commencement exercises. A hundred or so fresh second lieutenants in dress blues mixed proudly with their black gowned classmates. Shaking hands and advising, "You should have taken R.O.T.C. Now you'll probably be drafted and end up in my unit as a private." We congratulated ourselves and wondered how many would be back for homecoming ten years later.

The Officer Basic Course was at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, for those of us commissioned in Field Artillery. Although I tend to adapt well to new settings, I felt lonely and disoriented in basic at Ft. Sill. I knew no one on post. I was assigned to a suite with a young captain who had been to Vietnam and who would return there after completing the career course at the Artillery School.

The idea of the glory of battle was further substantiated by the image the Field Artillery projects of itself. In the office of virtually every self-respecting Field Artillery officer one can find a variation of this theme—the depiction of a gory blood-and-guts battlefield with an elegant, unscathed Field Artilleryman surveying the carnage with an aloof air. The caption reads, "The Artillery lends dignity to what would otherwise be a vulgar brawl." I was proud to be in the Field Artillery and secretly hoped that if I were to go into combat that I would fare as well as this mythical character.

## **Reality Of Warfare**

The transition from the notion of the glory of combat to the reality of warfare began in gunnery class. Our instructor was a no-nonsense Marine first lieutenant who had returned from Vietnam with a slight limp. The classes taxed our mathematical skills and challenged our ability to apply trigonometry to cannon artillery. As we calculated the proper elevation, deflection, and powder charge necessary to power a round from the tubes through the various atmospheric strata (considering various air temperatures, wind speed and direction and air density at each level as well as powder temperature and round rotation) and across potential obstacles to the target area, the purpose

of this exercise suddenly hit us. The scales of naiveté were beginning to fall. Innocence was ending. Those powerful shells were designed for one purpose—to blow apart human bodies . . . to destroy the complex and intricate beings that God had created and placed upon this earth.

Jerry, a sensitive classmate from California, had become a close friend. He reacted strongly. He inquired about the possibility of becoming a conscientious objector. "Too late," he was told. "You've gone too far. You're a part of the system now."

I had not requested orders to a combat zone. In fact, I hoped to stay as far from Vietnam as possible. I had requested assignment to Germany, hoping to tour Europe during leave times. But the Army had other plans. When I received the orders, I experienced a bit of a shock. War had always been an idea, a background in which a Hollywood plot could unfold and John Wayne or Audy Murphy could be heros. Now the Army was sending me to a strange land where human beings would try to kill me.

Wishing to break the news as gently as possible to my parents, I phoned saying, "The Army is offering me a free trip to Hawaii . . . the only catch is that it will be a "Rest and Recreation" break from my tour in Vietnam! I was sent to the Jungle Expert Course in the Panama Canal Zone and afterward soon found myself on a huge chartered jet leaving San Francisco for Vietnam. I sat next to my friend Jerry. The atmosphere was heavy, meditative. I can never remember such a silent flight. I reflected on my life. I thought about the awesome responsibilities facing me. At 23 years, I would be one of the oldest men in my unit. Would I be adequate? Would I be brave in battle? Would I panic? Would I be wounded? Would I come back alive?

I thought of recent conversations with my parents. They were realistic, perhaps more so than I. We had planned my funeral in case I didn't make it through my tour. It wasn't a morbid exercise, just a sober way of assuring that my wishes and thoughts would be expressed in case of my death. I knew that this planning would relieve some of the burden if the funeral became necessary. Some years later, a friend told me that my father, a World War II Veteran, had prayed openly in church that if God chose to bring me back alive that it would be with honor.

## Welcome To Vietnam

My first impressions of Vietnam remain vivid. The jet roared to a halt at Ton Son Nout. As we exited, we looked closely at the stewardesses—the last round-eyed girls we would see for months. The air was heavy and humid. There was a subtle odor that persisted in the nostrils. There was an uneasiness that gripped the stomach and never fully relaxed as long as I remained on Vietnamese soil. We

were loaded onto olive drab busses with wire mesh windows and taken to Logn Bnh where we were to be given unit assignments.

I will never forget the first nights. I slept so lightly that at the slightest noise, the faintest whisper or softest step, I would spring up fully awake. The tension was maintained as we mixed with those who were D.E.R.O.S.ing back to "The World," the United States. They showed us contreband photographs they had taken of the victims of war—mostly of Vietcong and North Vietnamese KIAs, but also of Americans. These were images too grotesque to be pumped into America's living room during the evening news. These vets called us "cherries" and "green" and delighted in recounting gruesome stories. They reminded us of how "short" they were (*i.e.*, "I'm so short I need a ladder to pick strawberries.") in contrast to the year we had just begun to serve.

Loudspeakers announced the new postings of unit assignments, and we streamed out of the barracks maintaining a veneer of toughness while looking with trepidation for our names and hoping for an assignment in a relatively "safe" area for duty. Assignments were slow in coming. We had time to think. I wonder why, for instance, we had never been told that our purpose was to win the war. Not in the Field Artillery Officers Vietnam Orientation Course (a five week course at Ft. Sill), not in the Officer Basic Course, not in Jungle Expert School. There was talk of body counts, attrition, and a negotiated settlement. But winning was never discussed. Survival was the issue. Learn to survive and bring back as many of your troops as you can.

Finally, the assignment was there. As I ran down the list, I found my name. I had talked with a number of vets about to leave the country and had definite ideas about which units were low profile and which exposed its members to high risks. I slid my finger from my name across to the unit assignment: the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile). My emotions were mixed. At first my heart sank. I had hoped to remain in IV Corps in the relatively secure Saigon area. The 101st operated in I Corps close to the DMZ, the demilitarized zone which separated North and South Vietnam, and the most active area of the country. At the same time I felt proud, remembering the rich tradition of this elite combat organization.

A typhoon prevented us from leaving immediately, and I said goodbye to Jerry who was going to the Americal Division. I thought of Bill Taylor, a friend from Ft. Sill who had stayed with my parents on the way to Jungle School in Panama. He had seen their second child just after his birth before leaving for Vietnam and the 101st. I wondered if I would see Bill.

The C-130 that flew us North was more suited for military equipment than for people. We clung to the webbing that lined the walls and sat on the narrow flip-down benches. The drone and

bobbing of the craft in the tropical winds nearly brought me to airsickness. Fortunately, we landed before I lost control of my lunch.

From the Phu Bai air strip we were packed north to Camp Eagle, the main base camp for the 101st. There we had a brief orientation and training in skills essential for airmobile warfare. The strangeness of being in a combat zone was enhanced by the constant rain and chill of the monsoon season as well as by the unfamiliar Vietnamese culture, language, and countryside. On the way to Camp Eagle, we passed cemeteries marked by circular graves with a tail (not unlike the letter "Q") to drain off the constant rain and floods. Through the villages nothing was familiar—no American cars, no tall buildings, no modern highways or traffic lights, and no golden arches. The people went about their slow-paced business without a glance. No flags to greet the newly arrived American liberators. No garlands. No smiles. They squatted in that curious (and comfortable as I later discovered) fashion as they discussed the affairs of their village.

The deuce-and-a-half continued to follow an escort jeep with its mounted machine gun. We passed rice paddies and boys on water buffalos. Jungle mountains stood against a steel grey sky. I wondered how many American boys were out there . . . and how many North Vietnamese . . . and how soon I would be there . . . and whether I would go home again.

## Camp Eagle

Orientation at Camp Eagle lasted five days. We practiced rappelling from helicopters and attended classes on air assault tactics. At night we rotated into the perimeter defence with the infantry units stationed there. It was at Eagle that I had my baptism of fire. I was lying on my bunk in my underwear (an item we would soon discover to be inappropriate for a jungle environment) when sirens screamed the warning of a ground attack. The ground shook and the air thundered with incoming rockets and mortars. I stuffed my feet into my jungle boots, grabbed my steel helmet, and a 12" buck knife my Dad had given me as an early birthday gift. I groped my way out to the sandbags near the perimeter. It seemed that the only thing louder than the exploding shells and the whine of rotary wings as helicopters attempted to escape the field was the pounding of my heart. I wanted to grab my steel pot and pull it down around me and pretend I was a turtle. As I sat there in the mud, drenched by monsoon rain, I wondered whether the Army gave Purple Hearts for catching pneumonia under hostile fire.

I was to join the 2nd of the 11th Field Artillery which had recently lost most of a battery in an attack on fire base Ripcord. I packed a duffel bag, threw it into a jeep and headed down QL 1 to fire base Tommahawk. Even with four-wheel drive, negotiating the

muddy road up to the hilltop encampment was difficult. I would be second in command on a half battery of 155mm Howitzers and 34 men. The battery commander stayed in a separate location with the other half of the battery to spread the firepower over a greater area. With the exception of one week's time, we always operated as two independent batteries. I eventually became the officer in charge of one of them.

Our mission was to defend the coastal villages from attack by North Vietnamese troops. To accomplish this, we made nine moves generally to the north and the west—toward the D.M.Z. and the infamous Asaw Valley, to impede the infiltration of NVA troops and supplies. Each move put us into unfamiliar territory and brought us closer to the enemy's strongholds.

## **Difficult Issues**

The most basic issue in combat is that of fear: fear of failure, fear of being wounded, fear of being captured, fear of death. There are many ways to fail. Will I be adequate in my job? Will I meet the expectations of my men and of my commander? Will I panic in the stress of battle? Will I be a hindrance rather than facilitate the accomplishment of my unit's mission?

How can one guard against failing as a chaplain in a combat zone? Let me speak from the perspective of a former combat officer. If failure may be defined as not measuring up to what is expected of one, it is necessary to define those expectations in order to evaluate success.

What does the soldier expect from a chaplain? First of all, the soldier expects the chaplain to be a human being, not a spiritual giant who is immune from fear or error. The soldier expects a chaplain who is morally upright and who believes. The soldier expects a chaplain to be available and to listen sensitively in those vulnerable moments when the soldier needs to express the deepest feelings and deepest fears of the heart.

## **Good Chaplains, Bad Chaplains**

I saw both good and bad chaplains in Vietnam. The good ones took the time to learn the mission, methods, and special challenges of the units they were supporting. They made an effort to get out to the troops on a regular basis and monitored their people's activities to be aware of crisis situations so they could be present to minister when most needed. They developed their military skills to the point that they were a help rather than a hindrance in emergency situations. One striking example of this took place when a chaplain stayed overnight with a platoon of infantry within sight of my position. When they

were hit with a ground attack, the chaplain declined to use a firearm, but encouraged the soldiers during the fire fight by spotting targets and helping with the wounded.

The poor chaplains were known as “fair weather friends.” They would show up on clear, sunny days when the intelligence reports predicted a low probability of hostile activity. They would joke and slap backs, but began to get nervous when shadows started getting long. Spending a night with the troops in the field was out of the question for them. Little real ministry is possible when the chaplain is a “fair weather friend.”

Let me make it clear that a good chaplain can have a tremendously effective ministry in a combat zone. A chaplain who has earned the respect of the troops can be a great encouragement to them. The chaplain can be a life-changing influence while enhancing the accomplishment of the unit’s mission.

## Avoiding Failure

How can a chaplain avoid failure? The most basic answer is to live out the faith. If one’s life is truly committed to God, can he not trust God to care for him while ministering in a hostile environment? Combat presents an opportunity for the chaplain to grow spiritually while putting his life into God’s hands in a very real way every day. Troops recognize and respond to the chaplain who lives the faith. Few things are as comforting to the combat soldier as the words, “Thus saith the Lord,” coming from a person in communion with his Creator.

## Spiritual Preparation

Another way that the chaplain can avoid failure is to prepare spiritually and psychologically for combat by facing the issue of the morality of war prior to mobilization. The last U.S. troops left Vietnam in March of 1973, and except for skirmishes such as Grenada and various terrorist actions, Americans have enjoyed a long period of peace. Chaplains with fewer than thirteen years of military service have not faced the likelihood of orders to a combat zone and may not have adequately dealt with the ethics of war on a personal level. Ministering to troops in combat is not the appropriate context for dealing with these questions. The chaplain should develop a theology of warfare compatible with the dogma he or she accepts as authoritative; *e.g.*, the Bible, doctrine of his religion, etc. He should read books that deal with this subject, especially those by authors who share his theological convictions. *Soon The War Is Ending* by Cornelius Vanderbreggen, Jr. was a help to me in the months before going to Vietnam.

## **Denying Fear**

Besides the fear of failure, there is the fear of being wounded, of being captured, and the fear of death. Fear unchecked can become debilitating and can neutralize a chaplain's ministry. The dangers of combat are real, and the ordinary combat soldier has to deal with fear on a daily basis.

Out of this reality comes what I term "cigarette lighter theology," those philosophical nuggets etched into the stainless steel lighters carried by the troops. One example is the inscription, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for I am the meanest S.O.B. in the valley." This perversion of the 23rd Psalm basically denies fear or hides it behind a macho veneer which projects invincibility. But the fear is there, even in the toughest of troops. You won't see it in groups where the talk is brave and weakness is hidden. You'll be privy to it while visiting the men guarding the perimeter at night when you can't see three feet in front of you and you wonder what's making that rustling noise in the elephant grass. One combat officer stated that soldiers can be divided into two categories: the ninety percent who admit to fear and the ten percent who lie about it.

Another popular inscription was, "When I die I'm going to Heaven, 'cause I've already served my time in Hell." At the least, such a statement reveals that the soldier is concerned about death and the afterlife, and such an affirmation can be an opening to a healthy discussion of his spiritual preparation for death.

## **The Effect Of Fear**

Fear and the stress it produces can cripple a soldier. We were on firebase Gladiator and had been experiencing daily "contact fire missions" and probes by North Vietnamese soldiers into our perimeter. One night a perimeter guard spotted an N.V.A. sapper approaching his position. He became so nervous that he put the muzzle of his M-16 to his shoulder and pointed the butt at the surprised N.V.A. Recovering somewhat, he threw a hand grenade, but forgot to pull the pin! The soldier was fortunate not to receive the grenade back properly armed. The incident is humorous and perhaps forgiveable, but another occurrence produced by the same fear was tragic.

A popular and competent lieutenant, with only three weeks left "in country," was checking on the perimeter guards. One post was manned by a G.I. who had been in Vietnam only a week. Seeing the shadowy figure of the lieutenant approaching, the guard forgot all his identification procedures and let loose with a burst of rifle fire, killing the young officer. In my opinion the culprit was the tension

produced by fear. Those who are the best trained to help soldiers work through the reality of fear are the chaplains.

## Dealing With Fear

Learning to deal with fear is a necessity both for the chaplain personally as well as for an effective ministry with soldiers. From the first day, I made it my top priority to meet daily with the Lord. In a sense it's easier to depend upon Him when so much of one's circumstances are out of control. But the pressures of the situation—periods of extreme activity, high tension, exhausting physical labor, lack of sleep followed by days of boredom, tedium, and the challenge of keeping the troops busy—can work to eliminate this time of personal meditation from one's life. To help me keep this rendezvous of prayer, Bible reading, and meditation, I had a trick. Every soldier carried with him a sheet of paper, tattered, stained, and cracked from being folded and unfolded daily. Drawn on the sheet was an image—a unit crest, a person, an animal or an airplane (the so-called "freedom bird" that would transport the soldier back to the "world"). The picture was divided into 365 squares, each numbered. The custom was for the soldier to carefully color in the highest remaining number each day so he would always know exactly how many days he had left before going home. This ritual became almost a religious act for many soldiers. For myself, I postponed checking off my day until after I had spent time with the Lord.

Certain passages of the Bible became particularly important to me and were useful in sharing with others during those vulnerable moments when they admitted their fears. I frequently read the "Soldier's Psalm" which begins:

He who dwells in the shelter of the most High  
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and  
my fortress, my God in whom I trust."

*Psalm 91:1, 2*

If you make the most High your dwelling—  
Even the Lord, who is my refuge—  
Then no harm will befall you,  
No disaster will come near your tent.

*Psalm 91:9*

Is this to be taken as a promise of divine protection? Does God grant safekeeping uniquely to His children? What about my friend Bill Taylor? He loved the Lord, yet he was viciously cut down in an ambush just weeks before he was due to return to his family. God doesn't guarantee immunity to bullets. Rather, He promises to be *with us during the battle*. The worst "harm" or "disaster" that can

befall one is to be eternally separated from God. The promise that God makes to His children is that His presence in the battle will continue throughout eternity should the believing soldier fall in combat.

“Because he loves me,” says the Lord  
“I will rescue him; I will protect him,  
He will call upon me, and I will answer him;  
I will be with him in trouble,  
I will deliver him and honor him  
With long life will I satisfy him  
And show him my salvation.”

*Psalm 91:14, 15, 16*

## No Accidents

On the battlefield it is comforting to know that from God's perspective there are no “accidents.” I do not intend to debate the balance between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, but simply to state what I have found most helpful for surviving spiritually on the battlefield. Why did I survive when a five pound chunk of shrapnel whizzed close enough to my head to blow my closely cropped hair before penetrating a 55 gallon drum behind me? Why did my friend, Dick, crawl safely out of a crashed helicopter only to be decapitated by the rotary blade? I have no answer to those questions. I only conclude that God has some purpose that I do not see.

In all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

*Romans 8:28*

I'll never forget Dick's personal calling card: Below “Major, U.S.A.” was written the following verse: “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline.” (*II Timothy 1:7*.) It seems to me that the best way a chaplain can prepare for mobilization is to cultivate a personal relationship with God. If the presence of God is a reality in one's daily life, it will be even more precious in the demanding environment of warfare. On the monument to Lord Lorence in Westminster Abbey is inscribed these words: “He feared man so little because he feared God so much.”

Learning to see from God's perspective in some way is an invaluable ability. Petrified by fear upon waking to see the army of Aram surrounding the town of Dothan with horses and chariots and a strong force, the servant of the Old Testament prophet Elisha said, “Oh, my Lord, what shall we do?” “Don't be afraid,” the prophet

answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

And Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes so he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

*II Kings 6:15, 16, 17*

God is more powerful than the enemy. He does not permit "accidents" but works according to the council of His own will. Man is responsible for the consequences of his actions, and war is a result of the evil in man. Perhaps Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego best understood the nature of this antinomy, of the protective power of a sovereign God and the responsibility of man for his actions when they said,

O, Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O King. But even if He does not, we want you to know, O King, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.

*Daniel 3:16, 17, 18*

These brave men recognized God's capability for saving them. The question of His will in the matter was left entirely in God's hands. These men didn't fear because whatever God decided would ultimately be for His glory and for their good. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are fit models for chaplains and soldiers in today's Army.

War is evil. General Douglas McArthur stated, "No one prays for peace like the soldier in combat." But the horrible circumstances of war can sometimes work out for good for the soldier whose life is given to God. Joseph understood the truth of God's working through dreadful conditions to shape him into a man useful to God. Addressing the ten brothers who had sold him into slavery, he said.

And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

*Genesis 50:20*

Chaplains have a unique position of responsibility and opportunity. Who is in a better position to meet the needs of those who daily put their lives on the line for their country? Of all people, we should be well honed in warfare as we engage in spiritual battle even during peacetime.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

*Ephesians 6:12*

# **“We Are Monks Also” Spirituality and Wholeness according to Thomas Merton**

**Marilyn King, S.M.**

Spoken hours before his tragic electrocution in Bangkok, Thailand, on December 18, 1968, these were the opening remarks of what was to be the final address of Thomas Merton, perhaps one of the twentieth century's most eloquent spiritual masters:

I was at a meeting to which many revolutionary university leaders from France, Italy, Germany, and the Low Countries had been invited. This meeting took place in Santa Barbara, California, at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, and the purpose of it was to give these young people a forum in which to express their views and to state what they were trying to do. In a lull between lectures I was speaking informally with some of these students, and I introduced myself as a monk. One of the French revolutionary student leaders immediately said: “We are monks also.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Merton, *The Asian Journal* (New York: New Directions, 1975), 328-329. [Throughout the rest of this article all works cited are by Merton.]

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As Merton continued his talk, delivered to members of his own Cistercian order (the Trappists<sup>2</sup>), he commented on how the assertion of the student was a challenge to those who profess to be monks but are not true monks at all. The true monk, he went on to say, is one who “takes up a critical attitude toward the world and its structures” and enters into a totally engaging dialectic of “world refusal . . . that also looks toward an acceptance of a world that is open to change.”<sup>3</sup> However, unlike the purely political revolutionary, the monk sees that the key to change lies not in uprooting economic substructures or rearranging political powerlines or destroying a class system in society, but in the transformation of one’s own consciousness. The task of the true monk is not primarily to turn the world upside down (though that may happen as an outcome of his life-choices), but to turn one’s own way of looking at reality completely around. This is a vocation to revolution of a much more profound nature. Merton was a revolutionary of this kind.

## Thomas Merton (1915-1968)

Merton was born on January 31, 1915, in Prades, France, the son of Owen Merton, an artist from New Zealand and Ruth Jenkins, also an artist, from Ohio and daughter of pacifist parents. His boyhood was marked by frequent moves around Europe, the United States, and the Caribbean, due mostly to the death of his mother when he was six years old and to the market for his father’s paintings. When he was sixteen, his father died and this double loss of parents catapulted him into an early independence as he continued his classical studies in Cambridge, England, and Columbia University in New York. Although he was a very good student and made the most of the broad education his travels gave him, his life style was punctuated with bouts of rather dissolute and rootless living. It was not until his graduate studies in English literature that his search for a deeper meaning and direction to his life began to take hold. This search issued in a decision in 1938 to become a Roman Catholic. Shortly after his conversion, he began a teaching career at St. Bonaventure University in New York and worked briefly with indigents at Friendship House in Harlem, thinking he might give himself more to helping others in that way. The event that changed his life dramatically was a retreat he made, at the suggestion of a friend, at Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky in 1941. He was profoundly moved by the monastic life he witnessed there; and shortly after his retreat, he became a member of the community of Trappists at the abbey.

<sup>2</sup> The “Trappists” is a more popular name given the Cistercians of the Strict Observance, a monastic order in the Catholic Church, begun as a reform of the Benedictine Order at the end of the twelfth century.

<sup>3</sup> *The Asian Journal*, 329-330.

Merton moved through the rigorous process of spiritual formation characteristic of the Trappists. In 1949 he was ordained a priest and appointed instructor of the hundreds of young men who were flocking to the monastery in the wake of World War II. He continued to hold that position under one title or another until 1965 when he retired to a hermitage on the abbey property.

## **Merton, The Writer**

Beginning in his Columbia days and continuing throughout his life, Merton was a prolific writer. Besides work on the spiritual life, for which he was first and perhaps best known, he wrote extensively on widely divergent topics—both of current and popular interest: the Vietnam War, the black revolution, the heritage of the American Indian, the ecological crisis; and in more specialized areas, such as the history of Cistercian Order, the Sacred Scriptures of Hinduism, and contemporary poetry of Latin America. Merton was a man of many interests, and a member of many groups. He was competent in eight languages. He was conversant with representatives of many cultures and with people in many walks of life. He spoke as easily and as knowledgeably on Greek drama as the new anti-poetry, on modern technology as sacred art, on the ancient Desert Fathers as on Ernest Hemingway, on Catholic theology as atheistic existentialism, on Marc Chagall as Bob Dylan, on Gandhian nonviolence as on the Marxist revolution.

Despite the wide divergencies among these areas of life and learning, Merton was not a scattered eclectic. He considered everything related to everything else. An anecdote illustrates this view of things. One day, on his way back to the abbey from an appointment in town, he stopped in a restaurant for a bite to eat. He soon became engaged in a conversation with his companions on St. Maximus, a seventh century Byzantine ascetical theologian. In the middle of the discussion, Merton suddenly jumped from the table, put a coin in the jukebox, selected “Sophistocated Swing,” and returned to the table to resume the dialogue—all this accomplished without any indication of incongruity.

Although Merton cannot be categorized solely as an inspirational writer, a fundamental spiritual outlook permeated everything he wrote and said. He mentioned that no matter what issue he addressed himself to, “[all] issues are terribly relevant to one great truth: that man is called to live as a son of God.”<sup>4</sup> In this sense, Merton was a monk: one who looks at reality from a point of view which sees beyond the way things appear to be to the deepest truth about them; *i.e.*, all share a common source of being, the good God.

<sup>4</sup> Concerning the Collection in the Bellarmine Library,” *The Thomas Merton Studies Center*, Vol. 1 (1971), 15.

No matter what he reflected upon—whether bomb shelters or Chinese proverbs—his focus sprang from a heightened awareness of the deeper realities, the fundamental truth that the vocation of everyone is to share in the divine life. It is this single-minded point of reference, combined with a vast range of interests, which allowed Merton to speak to the people of our day. He consistently penetrated to the heart of the matter.

Merton grew up with the twentieth century and kept his finger on the pulse of contemporary society through his vast reading, and with correspondence and dialogue with literally thousands of persons. Yet, in choosing a life removed from society and directed towards contemplative union with God, he was able to maintain a critical distance from contemporary society, which, in turn, enabled him to judge clearly wherein truth lay and illusion lurked. From the vantage point of a monastic existence, he identified what he believed to be the cause of political unscrupulousness, technological dehumanization, nuclear war, racial hatred, and all other symptoms of a contemporary malaise. Hence, the “world refusal” pole of the monk’s dialectic was a part of his very life style.

Merton retained an unstintingly optimistic for the future because he trusted in the unlimited power of God. Merton was confident that humankind is called especially in these apocalyptic times to a true and full life in God. Hence the other pole of “acceptance of a world that is open to change” is also part of the vision underlying his appraisal of our times. It is the art of living in this hope—beneath the structures of society which today seem to threaten human life and the existence of our planet—which Merton named “spirituality.” Those who live in this hope and vision are those whom Merton called true monks.

## Monkhood: The Balanced Life

In *New Seeds of Contemplation* Thomas Merton describes the spiritual life as “the perfectly balanced life.”<sup>5</sup> It is a life which attempts to blend all the facets of the human person and all the components of human existence into an integrated whole. The vivifying source of such a life, Merton believed, is a power within the depths of each person which binds together all conflicting forces, amalgamates all diverging elements, and builds a person into one piece. In theological terms, this power is the Holy Spirit who empowers a person to live in harmony with himself or herself and with everyone and everything else.

To live in a perfectly balanced way involves first of all an ability to respond to reality, “one of the most important—and most

<sup>5</sup> (New York: New Directions, 1961), 140. It is of interest to note here that the etymological root of “monk” is *monachos*, meaning oneness, wholeness.

neglected—elements in the interior life.”<sup>6</sup> According to Merton, the first step in the spiritual life is learning how to respond, how to see and taste and hear and feel what he called “the splendor that is all around us.”<sup>7</sup> In order to be at harmony within oneself and with all that is outside of oneself, a person must be able to respond to reality positively.

## Paradigms of Spiritual Wholeness

To explore the reasons why such a positive view of reality indicates that a person is living spiritually (being a true monk) and to examine the ways in which a person comes to such balance and harmony were the foci of much of Merton’s writing and teaching. Just as Merton did not always give a full or systematic analysis of certain topics but would, instead, simply tell a story or allude to a poetic phrase in order to capture the essence of his insight, three examples of properly balanced, spiritual responses to reality will be recounted in this article as capsule glimpses of what Merton held to be the heart of “true monkhood.” Although it is hoped the examples will speak of the well-balanced life without much commentary, a brief analyses of these paradigms will conclude the article. The three examples are drawn from the centuries-old Cistercian monastic order, the small American Shaker community, and the Japanese religion of Zen Buddhism.

## Cistercian Architecture

While Thomas Merton was still a young boy of ten years, his father, an artist by profession, brought him to France near his birthplace in the southern provinces where he wanted to paint the region’s countryside. From the description of the landscapes given in his autobiography, it is evident that Merton inherited from his father an artist’s eye for detail and beauty. Describing the medieval town of St. Antonin, Merton remarks how the church dominated and unified the town and surrounding countryside. It was the key to the meaning of the whole: “The church has been fitted into the landscape in such a way as to become the keystone of its intelligibility. Its presence imparted a special form, a particular significance to everything else that the eye beheld . . .<sup>8</sup>

This early experience of a church building bringing together diverse elements of a community found expression in a number of Merton’s later writings, particularly when he would speak of the significance of Cistercian architecture. In a history of the Cistercian Order, Merton mentions several times how the structure of a

<sup>6</sup> *No Man Is an Island* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1955), 33.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *The Seven Storey Mountain* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1948), 37.

Cistercian monastery shows forth in stone the spirit of those who live within. Energy, simplicity, austerity, and purity mark both the monastery and the monk. In *The Waters of Siloe* Merton writes of the Cistercian church.

The typical Cistercian church, with its low elevation, its plain, bare walls, lighted by few windows and without stained glass, achieved its effect by the balance of masses and austere, powerful, round or pointed arches and mighty vaulting. These buildings filled anyone who entered them with peace and restfulness and disposed the soul for contemplation in an atmosphere of simplicity and poverty. St. Benedict's doctrine on humility, the basis of his teaching, was written out before them in stone.<sup>9</sup>

The spirituality revealed in the architecture is disclosed both in the way the materials for the building are used and in the actual form of the structure.

The very fact that materials *are* used and a building *is* constructed for shelter and community activity is a statement that the lives of monks are involved in the things of the world. Although the monks take care not to advertise their personalities as craftsmen in the architectural design, the humility and self-effacement of the monastic builders do not indicate a spirituality which denies the world. Rather, monastic buildings by the very fact of their existence show that the monk is very much a part of the earth.

The spirit of the Cistercian community expresses itself in recognition and respect for the limitations of the materials which are used for the building. For the most part, the materials are poor, and no attempt is made to convert them into what may appear as costly. Merton comments on this characteristic of monastic architecture when he writes: "Here we see a perfectly valid expression of the Benedictine spirit . . . There is no faking. What is poor will glorify God by the splendor of its poverty."<sup>10</sup> Both stone and monk may be no more than what they are.

By an honest use of materials, Cistercian architecture manifests the true nature of the bricks and mortar which go into the construction of a monastic edifice. In their simply being themselves—sturdy and plain building materials—they are true, authentic, and real. In their purity, their sincerity, they point beyond themselves and announce something which is coming over the horizon. These common materials of stone and wood, glass and steel, with their

<sup>9</sup> (Garden City, New York: Garden City Books, 1951), 14.

<sup>10</sup> *The Silent Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1957), 89-90.

integrity safeguarded by those who have used them, penetrate through to a mystery behind them, to the Maker whose artifacts they are.

The chapel of a Cistercian monastery is built in a style that is most conducive to worship and contemplation. More than in any other part of the monastic buildings, care is given to fashion the structure in such a way that of its very form it gives praise to God. The monastic church, according to Merton, ought to be an “uncluttered place where everything is simple, clean, clear, light, plain, evident. For the witness of monastic celebration must itself be clear, simple and evident.”<sup>11</sup> Free of a “welter of confusing details,”<sup>12</sup> the clean style of the Cistercian church provides a setting in which meaningful song and ceremony may take place. Both work together in the praise of God.

The life of a Cistercian monk is a silent life, a life directed towards wordless contemplation. Just as the Cistercian fathers “did not waste words with God or with man . . . in their buildings they did not waste anything either.”<sup>13</sup> In accord with this view the Cistercian monastery is constructed so as to be a replica of the contemplative. The “mellow stones” which “speak eloquently of graceful mysticism”<sup>14</sup> reflect all that most intimately concerns the monk: his union with God. Not only is the chapel built for worship, but the cloister walls and garden are designed to both express and aid the prayer of the monk. The entire monastery is constructed, then, to be lighted from within by means of the courtyard which is “a quiet pool of pure sunlight and warmth,”<sup>14</sup> for the entire life of the monk is centered on the quiet contemplation of God.<sup>15</sup>

## Shaker furniture

The second paradigm of the spiritual life comes from the United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing, more commonly called the “Shakers.” This sect, during a period of expansion in the nineteenth century, spread from northeastern United States to the Midwest, settling in Kentucky in 1806, quite near the earliest Trappist foundation in America. It may be that this long-standing connection between the Shaker community and the Trappist monks was partly responsible for Merton’s interest in and respect for the religious beliefs and dedication of this Christian group. By the several comments he makes in his writings, Merton shows he was intrigued by the Shakers’ common decision to forsake secular society and life as celibates, pacifists, and ascetics while awaiting what they believed

<sup>11</sup> “Note on the New Church at Gethsemani,” *Liturgical Arts*, Vol. 36 (August 1968), 100.

<sup>12</sup> *The Waters of Siloe*, 15.

<sup>13</sup> *The Sign of Jonas* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1953), 24.

<sup>14</sup> *The Waters of Siloe*, 15.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 275.

to be the imminent end of the world. Particularly impressed with their view of work, Merton regarded the Society as “the purest kind of monastic witness in the area of work in which integrity of eschatological faith bore fruit in perfect work.”<sup>16</sup>

The “perfect work” of Shaker labor is perhaps best exemplified, according to Merton, in the furniture made by the Shaker craftsmen. The members of the Society believed that the artisan was an instrument whom God, the “great Artist,” directed in the designing of a piece of furniture to bring out from the untouched wood a pattern revealed to the carpenter by the angels. The final form of a work of furniture, the Shaker believed, was the expression of a spiritual force which “sprang directly from the mystery of God through Christ in the Believing artist . . .”<sup>17</sup> For this reason, the raw materials with which the artisan work called forth from him profound respect: the artist knew that from within the wood the divine design would be made manifest by the work of his hands. Because of this rather mystical outlook on Shaker craftsmanship, such heavenly inspired work was regarded as a kind of “religion in the wood.”

For the Shakers, then, work was worship. Consequently, they labored in an attitude of patience, humility, love, detachment. All competitive or compulsive spirits, which would only foster violence and greed, were strictly forbidden. The artisan, an instrument of the Master Builder, hid himself or herself in the work so that the heavenly pattern alone would show forth in the finished product. The artisan’s part in the fashioning of a chair, for example, was to allow the chair-in-the-wood to come forth from the natural materials and to be what it was meant to be. For this reason, anything superfluous or ornamental was regarded as dishonest work, untrue to the reality contained within the uncut wood.

Merton greatly admired the almost grim simplicity and spiritual purity of the Shaker furniture and acclaimed it an eloquent witness to the unself-consciousness with which it was made. The integrity, honesty, and humility of the craftsman brought forth in the wood a stark beauty which, Merton remarked, must issue from a communion with truth, especially with the truth of the worker’s inner self. Work for the members of the Society engaged them in something higher, directed them “to something that transcended and included both: a kind of wholeness and order and worship that filled the whole day and the whole life of the working community.”<sup>18</sup> This

<sup>16</sup> *Contemplation in a World of Action* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1971), 189.

<sup>17</sup> Introduction to *Religion in Wood: A Book of Shaker Furniture*, by Edward Deming Andrews and Faith Andrews (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1966), x.

<sup>18</sup> *Mystics and Zen Masters* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967), 198.

unique furniture of the United Society of Believers was for them a sign of salvation.

Although Merton admitted that the Shakers' attempt at utter purity in their life style was at least strange, and their loyalty was given to a vision which in fact led nowhere (as testified by their becoming virtually extinct in this century), he never ceased admiring the perfection of their furniture which he felt of itself was a verification of the reality of their vision. The wordless simplicity of the Shaker spirituality was silently expressed in the quiet and plain honesty of a table or chair.

## Japanese Tea Ceremony

In his college years, Merton became attracted to the religious traditions of the East, and this preoccupation remained with him until the end of his life. His interest in Zen Buddhism provides the final paradigm.

In Zen Merton sensed a power which was able to bring together the different dimensions of life into an inseparable unity. Writing in a preface to John Wu's book on Zen, Merton observed: "The Zen experience is a direct grasp of the *unity* of the invisible and the visible, the noumenal and the phenomenal, or, if you prefer, an experiential realization that any such division is bound to be pure imagination."<sup>19</sup> Zen transforms the ordinary into something more than that which meets the eye by awakening a primal consciousness hidden within the eye. And, according to Merton, nowhere is the spiritual power of Zen more clearly and more beautifully shown than in the Japanese tea ceremony.

The ancient "art of tea" is the antithesis of what in the Western experience is a cocktail party. It is, rather, a spiritual discipline, "in reality a deeply spiritual, one might be tempted to say 'liturgical,' expression of art and faith."<sup>20</sup> In the ritual, guests and host—by stylized gesture, traditional dress, and contemplative stillness—put off all that is superficial in their bearing and attitude and come together in a simplicity, and in a poverty where there is no longer any external distinction between them. In a freedom and spontaneity, born of a conscious consent to a religious ceremony, the participants lose themselves in simplicity, silence and contemplation. In such a spiritual atmosphere the guests and host reverence the poverty and incompleteness of the human person as well as the harmony of the world.

The art of tea, by its very ordinariness, its contentlessness, points beyond itself to a truth about the harmony which exists

<sup>19</sup> This preface is reprinted in *Zen and the Birds of Appetite* (New York: New Directions, 1968), 37.

<sup>20</sup> *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*, 91.

between the individual person and all else. In the poverty of the ceremony all that is superfluous is stripped away by the sharing of a cup of tea. Empty of self-consciousness, the guest and host are one. They recognize that they are in no way isolated from one another but are reconciled in an awareness of something beyond their own separate forms and the separate forms of a tea cup and the room in which they sit. Detached from the conventions of society and the distractions of speech and conceptual thought, the actors become one with and through the action in a purely spiritual, immediate awareness of a unifying reality which is beyond subject-object distinction. They are at one with all that is—without the mediation of logical verbalizing. They have surrendered their persons to one another in a ceremony which has become “a celebration of oneness and convergence, a conquest of multiplicity and of atomization . . .”<sup>21</sup>

What is true of the art of tea will be true also of Japanese graphic art. A peculiarity of Zen art Merton notes in *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*, is “that it is able to suggest what cannot be said, and, by using a bare minimum of form, to awaken us to the formless.”<sup>22</sup> This kind of art beckons the observer to enter into it, not in order to understand any content or subject represented, for there is as little of that as possible, but to participate in the energy that is present beyond the form. The purpose of the art is to incite a kind of meditation which is not an exercise in explaining or analyzing, but in simply paying attention. It is an awareness “which simply sees what is right there and does not add any comment, any interpretation, any conclusion. It just sees.”<sup>23</sup> In Zen calligraphy, for instance, the beholder can grasp what is happening in the art only insofar as the art and the person experiencing the art are detached from what is represented. The revealed is seen as simply what it *is*.

Merton summarizes the spirit which is expressed in the tea ceremony by comparing it to the spirit manifested in twelfth century Cistercian architecture.

The spirit of the tea ceremony is found in the basic norms which govern it: Harmony, Respect, Purity (of heart) and Stillness (in the sense of *quies* and *hesychia*). But to make this spirit more evident we can say that it is the same sort of spirit manifested in the simplicity of twelfth-century Cistercian architecture at Fontenay or Le Thoronet: an inward joy in poverty and simplicity, for which the untranslatable Japanese term is *Wabi*. Hasumi describes it in an arresting phrase [sic] as “an

<sup>21</sup> *Mystics and Zen Masters*, 10.

<sup>22</sup> P.6

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

inwardly echoing aesthetic poverty.” Surely this is a most important concept for those of us who are struggling to recover something of the contemplative and spiritual concept of simplicity and poverty which are essential to the Cistercian way of life.<sup>24</sup>

## An Analysis of the Paradigms

By his own comparison of the Japanese tea ceremony with Cistercian architecture Merton leads us to seek out elements which are common to all three models just presented, elements which he himself believed to be symbolic expressions of the spiritual life, of true monkhood, of integrated ways to respond to reality.

To begin with, all three cases evidence a certain attitude of the spirit towards that which is material, visible, and sensible. This attitude regards such phenomena as stone, wood, ceremonial gesture, not as things to be escaped or denied, but to be considered in a way which both respects them for what they are and which uses these material things and visible actions to express what is of the spirit. The spiritual life, in the light of these examples given by Merton, is not a withdrawal, but an acceptance of external reality as integral to and supportive of that very life.

Another striking characteristic common to all three models is that of simplicity. Each example illustrates a belief that the spiritual response to reality lies in allowing something simply to be what it is. In each case there is a deliberate avoidance of whatever is ornamentation, falsification, veneer. The limitations and imperfections, of limited and imperfect things, are not covered over. Instead, it is in putting off all that is artificial, and by whittling away the superficial, that the truth is discovered about reality. Once all that is extraneous is removed, the truth that is revealed is that the real is more than what first meets the eye. In this sense, the spiritual response to reality is “unworldly.” It is a response which views everything in a perspective which sees beneath the limitations of the visible. As details and frills and masks are taken away, consciousness is directed to a reality greater than that which is apprehended at the level of the immediately detectable. Something which is greater than that which can be seen or imagined or conceptualized emerges—the transcendent source of everything and everyone that is. Simplification gives birth to the experience of God.

The stripping to essentials exemplified in the above three paradigms includes, further, a purification of the persons involved in the particular responses to reality cited. The personality of the architect, the hand of the craftsman, the social roles of the participants in the tea ceremony—all these are hidden in the

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 91.

respectful search for truth which holds all together. By a self-effacing humility the authentic self is contacted. By a renunciation of all effort to assert oneself, the depths of the self are revealed. This is paradox of the spiritual life.

In each example given, Merton seems to be showing that a person comes to a knowledge of the truth when he or she removes from his or her vision anything that is false. Such a person knows not only that which is made or designed, but knows and is at one with the Maker, the Designer, the One beneath all things. Whether in the village of St. Antonin or in a tea room, the spiritual person lives in each in such a way that false distinctions vanish and diverse elements are reconciled in an experience of truth and union. In a poverty which accepts the limitations of what a thing or the self truly is, all things come together into one and in this convergence all that is, is united to that which causes them to be in a kind of original harmony and balance. This process of simplification and resulting unification and wholeness is the spiritual life, the life in which everything is "perfectly balanced," everything is in its proper place, everything has a meaning because it is related to its source, the power that is within the depths of each thing that exists. This is the life which has discovered in the ordinary and the everyday "the splendor that is all around us."

By living from this point of view Merton believed the human person becomes a revolutionary. He or she lives out of a transformed consciousness. His Bangkok talk concluded in this vein.

I think, by way of closing, that this kind of view of reality is essentially very close to the Christian monastic view of reality. It is the view that if you once penetrate by detachment and purity of heart to the inner secret of the ground of your ordinary experience, you attain to a liberty that nobody can touch, that nobody can affect, that no political change of circumstance can do anything to. I admit this is a bit idealistic. I have not attempted to see how this works in a concentration camp, and I hope I will not have the opportunity. But I am just saying that somewhere behind our monasticism, and behind Buddhist monasticism, is the belief that this kind of freedom and transcendence is somehow attainable.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *The Asian Journal*, 342.

# **Management and Spirituality**

**W. Gregg Monroe**

When the early Christian apologist Tertullian argued against those who wanted to borrow ideas from secular philosophers to explain their faith, he asked, “What has Athens (the center of philosophy) to do with Jerusalem (the center of faith)?”

The title of this article raises a similar and perennial question: “What has management to do with spirituality?” Every career chaplain can count on spending substantial time and effort supporting the ministries of others in a managerial capacity; how does that relate to spirituality?

Chaplaincy staffing procedures follow the Army doctrine called “Forward Thrust.” These procedures place chaplains and chaplain assistants, the Unit Ministry Team or UMT, as close as possible to the soldiers who bear the brunt of battle. However, UMTs above the battalion level are tasked to support the ministry in their subordinate units. Providing such support requires supervisory, management, and a variety of technical staff skills. These are management responsibilities and involve management tasks. (In this article, “management” refers to tasks in any of these positions.)

## **Clergy and Management**

Much of the supportive work at successive levels of leadership in ministry—at brigade, division, corps, and above—is similar to

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management tasks in any number of other large organizations. In *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices*, Peter Drucker describes the purpose and tasks of management in very broad terms.

... [M]anagement, that is, the organ of leadership, direction, and decision in our social institutions is a generic function which faces the same basic tasks in every country and, essentially, in every society. Management has to give direction to the institution it manages. It has to think through the institution's mission, has to set its objectives, and has to organize resources for the results the institution has to contribute.<sup>1</sup>

Popular wisdom among clergy sees "missions," "objectives," "resources," and "results" as buzz words, and considers time spent dealing with the problems these words represent as unprofitable time away from "ministry." "Management" and "ministry" are often seen as if at opposite ends of the priority pole. For many chaplains, however, these words represent the daily realities of their job.

If we think of the problem only in terms of the conflict between management and *ministry*, however, we may focus too much attention on the contrasts between two types of activities, instead of inquiring about the *meaning* of activities. What does it mean to become a manager of ministry? If we have become ministers because we care about ministry, are there ways to care about ministry, as managers?

## Spirituality and Management

The purpose of this article is to explore a different way of thinking about management for chaplains and other clergy. In this view, management and ministry are human activities, affected by the ambiguities of everything human. On the level of daily work, they may be quite different; but management, as well as ministry, offers opportunities for inner growth and discipline. This article looks more deeply into human spiritual growth for a starting point to examine both ministry and management.

In *Reaching Out: Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*, Henri J. M. Nouwen writes, "... To live a spiritual life means first of all to come to the awareness of the inner polarities between which we are held in tension."<sup>2</sup> His book is a description of the movement between the poles of loneliness and solitude, hostility and hospitality,

<sup>1</sup> Peter Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), page 17.

<sup>2</sup> Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1975), page 12.

illusion and prayer. These poles reflect our relation to ourselves, to others, and to God. These polarities are not specified for managers or ministers, but for human beings.

In this article, I focus attention primarily on the polarity of hostility and hospitality. Hospitality, according to Nouwen, is not a trivial entertainment. It is a vocation to meet certain human needs, a vocation which can be difficult to pursue. Nouwen writes:

In our world full of strangers, estranged from their own past, culture and country, from their neighbors, friends and family, from their deepest self and their God, we witness a painful search for a hospitable place where life can be lived without fear and where community can be found . . . The movement from hostility to hospitality is hard and full of difficulties . . . But still—that is our vocation: to convert the *hostis* into a *hospes*, the enemy into a guest and to create the free and fearless space where brotherhood and sisterhood can be formed and fully experienced.<sup>3</sup>

The vocation to hospitality is for all persons: managers, ministers, and managers of ministry.

In addition to Nouwen's concept of hospitality, Peter Drucker provides a comprehensive account of management tasks which can clarify the role of management in the large organizations which provide the contexts of our hospitality. There are more basic resources. In Biblical history, for example, the stories of Moses appointing the judges in *Exodus* 18 and the election of the deacons in *Acts* 6, with reflection on our own vocation, can equip us to care for management and for ministry in a new way.

## **The Manager's Struggle With Hostility**

With several years experience in public personnel administration, I have found that clergy and other helping professionals tend to have three kinds of problems with management. Each of these can be a cause of alienation and hostility. First, it seems the further we go into management or technical functions, the easier it is to lose touch with why we have become managers in the first place. Secondly, it seems the more time we spend in management, the less time we have for the functions of direct ministry; this is a loss which we must grieve. Thirdly management tasks often force us to face conflicting claims, priorities, and values.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, page 46.

## **These Mountains Make Their Own Weather!**

The transition from ministry as we ordinarily think of it to management or supervisory work can be an experience in "culture shock." In a battalion UMT assignment, a local parish, or most other forms of personal ministry, we respond to needs as we find them. Our whole ministry is based on responding to persons in need. As we create and run our programs, we usually have a clear sense of the needs we are trying to meet. This is not the case with management. In a sense, we are distanced from the people whom we serve.

Often management positions are in headquarters or organizations that are removed from the site of ministry. These organizations seem to operate with different rules and create different pressures. It can be a full time job just keeping track of what is going on around the manager, to say nothing about what is happening in the field.

One summer, my family and I went tent camping in the Wallowa Mountains in the northeastern corner of Oregon. We went east, because the western and central parts of the state were rainy and wet, and the weather in the east looked good. And the weather held, until the first night on our campsite. We had just crawled into our sleeping bags, when we were hit with our first drenching thunderstorm. We were prepared for a shower or two, but not for the succession of storms which finally washed us out.

On the way out of the canyon, we asked the forest ranger about the weather elsewhere. "It's great," he said. We asked how it could be so great everywhere else, and so miserable where we were. "Oh," he said, "*these* mountains make their own weather!" Supervisors and managers of ministry often find themselves in mountains that make their own weather.

### **The "Activity Trap"**

A second problem is that busy supervisors and managers of ministry often grieve for the loss of activities and relationships as a source of affirmation for their vocation and ministry. We chose to leave our stormy campsite. Managers cannot easily nor responsibly stop supporting the ministries of others on a whim.

The ministry is not the only profession for which this is a problem. My first project as a public personnel analyst was to design and manage a promotional examination for counselors in a state agency. The personnel manager told me that he did not like having to try to select counselors for promotion. Even though experienced counselors should be able to do the best job, when the best counselors were selected, they were the most unhappy with supervisory work. They tended to spend too much time trying to maintain a counseling load, and not enough time supervising.

Management theorist George Odiorne has described this problem in his book, *Management and the Activity Trap*. The “activity trap” ensnares supervisors who try to do what they have always wanted to do most, instead of the supervisory work the organization needs them to do.

Falling into the activity trap is not the result of stupidity. In fact, the most intelligent, highly educated people tend to be those most likely to become entrapped in interesting and complex activities. Having spent years mastering one class of activities, called a *profession*, they persist in practicing those activities, as learned, even when the objectives practically cry out for some other kind of behavior. The age of specialization has produced a generation of people who have learned to become *emotionally attached to irrelevancies*.<sup>4</sup>

Even the most dedicated manager or supervisor might resent hearing a beloved personal ministry called an “irrelevancy.” But when that manager is tempted to deprive brigade, division, or post UMTs and their units of the support for their ministries in order to “do his own thing,” it may be an appropriate word.

## Organizations Cannot Care

Finally, when we are part of a large institution like the Army, a university, a hospital, a board or an agency in a civilian denomination, the ministry we have known and loved may become just another source of conflicting demands on our time and energy. Paul W. Pruyser describes the conflict between the features of institutions and the work to which clergy are most accustomed this way.

Organizations, bureaucracies, states, or associations do not care—at best they may facilitate the ways in which one person may care for another. They are equipped to administer or manage, but they themselves cannot care. In fact, many of their habits and procedures militate against the essence of caring: they often perceive needs falsely; they often fail to grant autonomy or respect freedom; they rarely see any person as “the other” in his full integrity and with his own growth program. Not only are they more distant from us than the persons we meet in our life—their distant existence is so overwhelming and molding that they thwart the essence of caring . . . Certainly they render services and provide

<sup>4</sup> George S. Odiorne, *Management and the Activity Trap* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), page 7. (italics in original).

facilities and do so at a price, but caring is of an altogether different order.<sup>5</sup>

When we are pulled from our parish or battalion to work in a management environment and thereby deprived of the opportunity to perform the ministry which is our calling, it should be no surprise that an impersonal institutional environment may have a disorienting effect on our values. The familiar setting of ministry is gone, many of the activities of ministry are discontinued, and the values which cluster around caring for persons seem out of place with many management practices.

## What is Our Vocation?

It is possible that some clergy are not called to deal with the issues that arise in large institutional environments. One of my teachers in college, who was an influential mentor for my own ministry, spent 25 years in the civilian pastorate before becoming a teacher. Very early in his career, he apparently was identified as a "comer." After a few obligatory years in rural churches, he found himself offered one of the larger churches in the area. After thinking how the larger church would change his ministry, he requested a five church circuit in a rural area.

I do not think anyone who knows rural churches could say that this pastor was trying to avoid difficult work. He believed he was called to work with a different set of problems than those of large churches. When I knew him, he had been recognized as an expert in the sociology of the rural church. He had completed more graduate work, and in addition to teaching, served as an advisor to students, like me, who were preaching in rural churches while attending college. After he retired from teaching, he eventually went back to a small church where he spent many more years in productive ministry.

If we do not have the option my teacher had, we need a basis for ministry in the large institutional setting. One starting point is Nouwen's discussion of hospitality: The manager of ministry is a "host" for ministry.

## Hospitality and Management

As we become competent in our technical skills, we may also learn to acknowledge our fear and hostilities about being thrust into work for which we doubt our calling. And, in the void created by the loss of personal ministry, we may find room to care for the ministries of

<sup>5</sup> Paul W. Pruyser, *Between Belief and Unbelief* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), pages 178-179.

others. We may become hosts for the ministry we plan for, lead or support.

The sacrifice of personal ministry may be only the beginning of the struggle to become a host for ministry. Three parts of Nouwen's discussion of hospitality seem especially fruitful for managers of ministry.

The host has three functions. The host provides a free and friendly space for the guests; the host is an "articulate presence" to the guests; and the host makes it possible for the guests to share their gifts, and to transcend the distinctions between guests and host. Each of these themes finds responses in management theory and in the Biblical tradition.

## A Free and Friendly Space

Nouwen is from the Netherlands, and in his book he compares the German and Dutch words for hospitality. The German word for hospitality is *Gastfreundshaft*—"friendship for the guest;" while the Dutch word is *Gastvreijheid*, or "freedom of the guest."<sup>6</sup> Nouwen recalls the stories of Abraham entertaining the angels, the widow of Zarephath accepting Elijah into her home, and the disciples on the road to Emmaus who offered hospitality to Jesus. From these stories "... we realize not just that hospitality is an important virtue, but even more that in the context of hospitality guest and host can reveal their most precious gifts and bring new life to each other."<sup>7</sup>

I learned to see hospitality in a new light after spending an evening in a German *Gasthaus*. When I think of hospitality as a model for management and ministry, my relationship to my host on that occasion comes to mind immediately.

The *Gasthaus* was operated largely by one family—father, mother, son, and *Oma* (grandmother). Because it was so much smaller than American hotels or motels, it was possible to visit with my hosts and to see them at work—cleaning rooms, carving meat in the small basement *Metzgerei*, and cooking for the guests and regulars in the kitchen. The family lived in the *Gasthaus*. Although this was in some sense convenient, their daily lives were constrained by the fact that they always had to do more than eat and sleep in order for their guests to have food and lodging.

Likewise, managers of ministry must do more than practice ministry, if they are to be hosts for the ministry in the institution. Peter Drucker describes the tasks of management this way.

There are three tasks, equally important but essentially different, which management has to perform to enable

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, page 50.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, page 47.

the institution in its charge to function and to make its contribution [to society]:

1. the specific purpose and mission of the institution, whether business enterprise, hospital, or university;
2. making work productive and the worker achieving;
3. managing social impacts and social responsibilities.<sup>8</sup>

According to Drucker, the first task for the manager is to ensure that the organization accomplishes its primary mission. In the case of ministry, a manager of ministry is responsible for making sure that ministry to soldiers and their families takes place. The manager is a host charged to provide for the ministry of others within the organization, charged to provide a “free and friendly space” for ministry much like my German host provided such a place for me. And like my host, chaplains in management roles must do more than minister if they are to provide for the ministry in their organizations.

This is not a new situation for leaders in the Jewish and Christian religious traditions. In *Exodus* 18, we can read how Moses was swamped with the (probably meaningful and fascinating) task of deciding disputes for the people of Israel during their wilderness journey. Jethro, his father-in-law, offered Moses some advice. Jethro suggested that Moses appoint judges who would decide the simpler cases, while Moses would deal with only the most difficult ones. Moses accepted the recommendation of his volunteer consultant, to the long-term benefit of Israel.

*Acts* 6 provides a slightly different case. The Christian community in Jerusalem took offerings which were distributed to widows in the community. For some reason, the widows of Hellenistic Jewish Christians thought they were being cheated. The conflict came to the attention of Peter and the other apostles. To deal with the issue, they created a new level of responsibility within the organization—the diaconate. With this new level of management, the offerings could be accounted for without requiring the time and constant attention of the apostles.

In each case, the leaders of these communities did exactly what we would rather not do; *i.e.*, they took themselves out of direct performance of ministry, created new levels of responsibility (or space) within their communities, and increased their own supervisory load.

The stories of Moses and Peter demonstrate one element of the spirituality of leadership for ministry. They thought first of the needs and missions of their communities and then sacrificed their own personal ministries for the sake of the mission. In light of the difficulties in adjusting to work in “mountains that make their own

<sup>8</sup> Drucker, *Op. cit.*, pages 39-40.

weather," some comments of Drucker point to the spiritual and vocational issues for managerial work:

Business enterprises—and public-service institutions as well—are organs of society. They do not exist for their own sake, but to fulfill a specific social purpose and to satisfy a specific need of society, community or individual . . .

Management, in turn, is the organ of the institution. It has no function in itself, indeed, no existence in itself. Management, divorced from the institution it serves, is not management.

What people mean by bureaucracy, and rightly condemn, is a management that has come to misconceive itself as an end and the institution as a means . . .<sup>9</sup>

On that evening long ago in Germany, my German host made it clear to me that he wanted to meet my needs for food and lodging, and to provide a point of entry into the surrounding German culture. Had he only fed and lodged himself and his family, my host probably would have gone broke, and his *Gasthaus* would have not been a place of *Gastfreundschaft*. As managers, supervisors, or staff persons, we are most effectively hosts for ministry when we are very clear that we are not in our positions for our own sakes, but for the sake of those whose needs and ministries depend on our skills and knowledge.

It is not easy to give up the practice of ministry—even for a good cause. Our vocation, however, is to transform our loss into gains for others.

Once we have found the center of our life in our own heart and have accepted our aloneness, not as a fate but as a vocation, we are able to offer freedom to others. Once we have given up our desire to be fully fulfilled, we can offer emptiness to others. Once we have become poor, we can be a good host.<sup>10</sup>

The inevitable grief for the loss of our own personal ministry creates the space which we have to offer to the ministry of others.

## **The Host as an Articulate Presence**

A chaplain, assigned to management or staff work, might well concentrate primarily on creating or maintaining an organizational

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, page 39.

<sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.*, page 73.

space for ministry which others can use. This work is “systems intensive.” A supervisor, on the other hand, who deals directly with members of a UMT, or “guests,” is involved in “people-intensive” work. This “systems intensive—people intensive” distinction adds some complexity to the work of the host for ministry.

It is important to create a “free and friendly space,” but this does not mean that the guests are left to wander aimlessly about. Nouwen makes this clear when he writes of the host as an “articulate presence.” According to Nouwen, “. . . receptivity is only one side of hospitality. The other side, equally important, is confrontation.”<sup>11</sup>

To be receptive to the stranger in no way implies that we have to become neutral “nobodies.” Real receptivity asks for confrontation because space can only be a welcoming space when there are clear boundaries, and boundaries are limits between which we define our own position. Flexible limits, but limits nonetheless. Confrontation results from the articulate presence, the presence within boundaries, of the host to the guest by which he offers himself as a point of orientation and a frame of reference.<sup>12</sup>

This part of hospitality is similar to what chaplains do in providing pastoral care and counseling. During the time we are working with persons, we put their needs ahead of our own, while guiding the counseling process for the maximum benefit of the persons who have come for help. Sometimes caring for a person involves the uncomfortable confrontation.

A college student was visiting in the home of some family friends. He had not been with them since he was in grade school, so he asked right away if there were any “house rules.” The host, remembering the student’s good behavior as a child, replied, “No, we don’t have any rules around here.” A week later, his host asked to speak to him. “Since you’ve been here, I have discovered that we do have house rules. And you have broken most of them.” The confrontation was the beginning of a much more hospitable relationship.

“Confrontation,” as Nouwen uses the term, is not hostile. In this context, it may help to understand “confrontation” in terms of its root meaning, “face-to-face.” The assertive presence of the host affords the guests a personal guarantee of concern for their well-being.

As a host, what does the supervisor of ministry have to articulate? According to Peter Drucker, the second task of all management is “making work productive and the worker achieving.”

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, page 69.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

We say whatever we have to say that will positively affect the work of those for whom we are responsible in the organization, especially if it helps persons to perform their work more effectively.

We occasionally hear supervisors say that they want to stand back to see what a certain worker can do without being given direction. Workers who are given a place to work without any sense of the organization, its needs, or its special features, are like children who are taught to swim by being thrown into the river: a few drown, some begin to swim, but many learn to hate the water. For the sake of the guests, the host must be, as Nouwen says, an “articulate presence.”

Peter Drucker takes seriously the supervisor’s responsibility to subordinates. He writes, “The fundamental reality for every worker, from sweeper to executive vice president, is the eight hours or so he spends on the job. In our society of organizations, it is the job through which the great majority has access to achievement, to fulfillment, and to community.”<sup>13</sup>

What does the supervisor have to offer a subordinate that will help him become an achieving worker? Drucker identifies some of the prerequisites for job achievement.

To enable the worker to achieve, he must . . . be able to take responsibility for his job. This requires: (1) productive work; (2) feedback information; and (3) continuous learning.

Perhaps most importantly for supervisors, Drucker contends.

It is folly to ask workers to take responsibility for their job when the work has not been studied, the process has not been synthesized, the standards and controls have not been thought through, and the physical information tools have not been designed. It is also managerial incompetence.<sup>14</sup>

I doubt that many supervisors would admit to not enjoying their work on occasion; but very few could be accused of being managerially incompetent on purpose. Supervisors of ministry have the potential to become better than average supervisors, if we are willing to learn from our pastoral care how communication processes work.

Many of us have spent hours with couples and families, helping them to understand each other. Who has not heard a family member say or imply, “If they *really* loved me, I know they would understand.” We need to remember how long it takes before persons

<sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*, page 267.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

can realize that one person may love another very deeply and still fail to "understand."

What we know is true in pastoral work applies to management, as well. Drucker points the way to increasing supervisory competence.

For centuries we have attempted communication "downward." This, however, cannot work, no matter how hard and how intelligently we try. It cannot work, first because it focuses on what *we* want to say. It assumes, in other words, that the utterer communicates. But we know that all he does is utter. Communication is the act of the recipient. What we have been trying to do is to work on the emitter, specifically on the manager, the administrator, the commander, to make him capable of being a better communicator. But all one can communicate downward are commands, that is, prearranged signals. One cannot communicate downward anything connected with understanding, let alone with motivation. This requires communication upward, from those who perceive to those who want to reach their perception.<sup>15</sup>

Drucker contends that some form of management by objectives is essential to good communication in an organization. The supervisor focuses attention on the objectives and invites the subordinate to offer his own ideas. These are then compared with the needs of the organization. It is a learning process for both. The subordinate learns about the realities of the organization he has joined, and the manager discovers unsuspected strengths in the subordinate.<sup>16</sup>

It seems reasonably clear that Moses and Peter and their leadership needed to be articulate with the persons who accepted new responsibilities. The new judges had to know the limits of their jurisdiction, which cases to refer to their superiors, and the proper procedures. Stephen, Philip, and the other deacons had to know what was required of them in dealing with the sensitive disputes they were to resolve.

## Managing the Impacts of Ministry

The third task of management, according to Drucker, is to manage "social impacts and social responsibilities." It may seem strange to speak of managing the "impacts" of ministry, as if ministry might be hazardous to the environment. In the first place, ministry intends to have an impact on persons and organizations; and in the second

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, page 490.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, page 491.

place, the intention is to do good to persons individually and in groups. This task surfaces important issues for the management of ministry.

When we are working in a civilian parish or assigned to an Army battalion, we spend most of our time responding to the needs which come to our attention. As we work, we receive responses to our efforts which let us to know if we are on the right track. A large part of our effectiveness in ministry depends on recognizing needs and responding appropriately.

Management is different. As we move up in the organization, our immediate involvement in ministry decreases, and we must rely on second and third-hand assessments for the impact of our ministry. Should we see the need for a change in what is going on, the further we are from direct ministry, the harder it can be to make that change.

And sometimes changes we make do not work out the way we expect; then, our distance from the front line of ministry means that the mistake can have consequences far beyond our expectation. This may be why Drucker describes the “central ethic of responsibility” as *primus non nocere* above all, “do no harm.”<sup>17</sup> If we are to “do no harm” as managers, we must learn a different way of thinking about ministry.

In his book, *Servant Leadership*, Robert K. Greenleaf writes of the leader’s “foresight.” In a counterpoint to Drucker, Greenleaf calls foresight “the central ethic of leadership.” He quotes Machiavelli.

Thus it happens in matters of state; for knowing afar off (which it is only given a prudent man to do) the evils that are brewing, they are easily cured. But when, for want of such knowledge, they are allowed to grow so that everyone can recognize them, there is no remedy to be found.<sup>18</sup>

To anticipate problems and correct them; to give direction to ministry, means, according to Greenleaf, that we learn to think beyond the immediate situation of ministry. Greenleaf describes this thinking as seeing the unit of the past and the future in a “moving average.”<sup>19</sup> To put it in other terms, the manager of ministry must learn to look at the ministry *in depth*, or from a spiritual perspective. In management, we are hosts for the ministry of the future, as well as the sometimes troublesome present.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, page 369.

<sup>18</sup> Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), page 24.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

For example, a superficial analysis of Moses' problem suggests that he had an unmanageable calendar. When Jethro watched Moses struggle with his impossible schedule, he has at least two ways of interpreting what he saw. From one point of view, he was seeing what we might call the insatiable maw of administration.

But Jethro obviously saw more; he saw the need for a new way to lead the people and to meet their needs. Jethro himself was about to leave; how would the people of Israel structure their lives and resolve their disputes after they reached their new land, when Moses might be there no longer?

Similarly, the conflict over the offerings could have been "micromanaged" by Peter. All he had to do was to prepare a duty roster for the apostles, with each taking a turn counting and distributing the offering. The organization certainly would have been kept simple. But suppose Peter were too busy to pray or to dream, or were unable to keep his appointment with Cornelius; or suppose Stephen and Philip were not trained for their future service—what might have been the impact on the growth of Christianity during this crucial time in its history?

If we take Moses and Peter as examples, we see that their leadership was based on recognizing the spiritual dimensions of apparently ordinary problems. And if we can learn how to see the spiritual depths of ordinary organizational miseries, we may find ways to care for ministry that we must, according to our responsibilities, support.

Being a host for ministry does not mean that we no longer care about ministry; it means that we learn to think about ministry in different ways. We learn to live on the boundary between ministry and the organization or institution we minister to. We do not pursue our own ministries, but spend our days and nights helping others find clarity in what they are called to do. We cannot merely enjoy present successes or curse present miseries; we must see the whole of ministry, and see it in depth.

In the last section of his book, Nouwen writes about the movement "from illusion to prayer." He describes the "paradox of prayer," "... we have to learn how to pray while we can only receive it as a gift."<sup>20</sup>

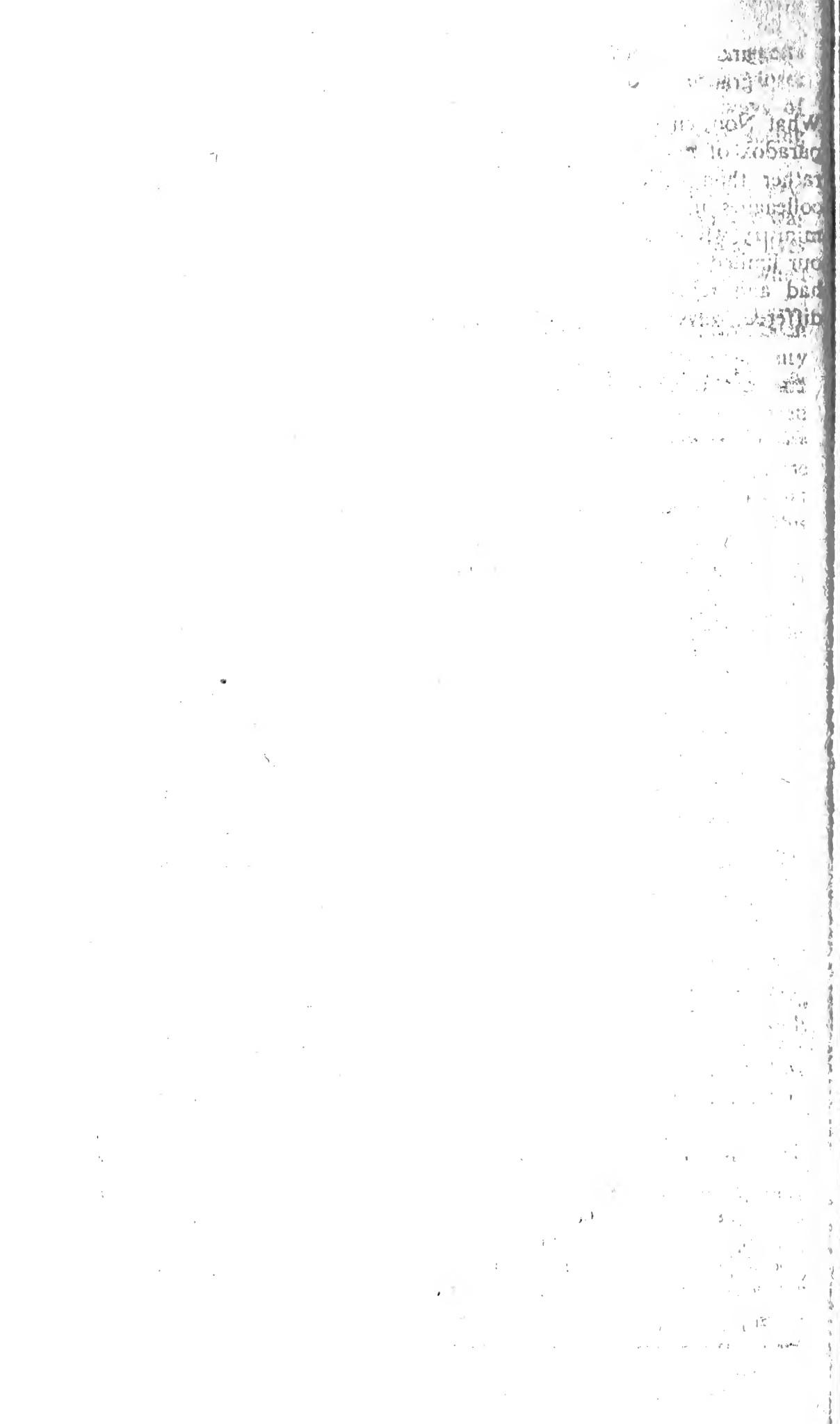
We cannot plan, organize or manipulate God; but without a careful discipline, we cannot receive him either. This paradox of prayer forces us to look beyond the limits of our mortal existence. To the degree that we have been able to dispel our illusion of immortality and have come to the full realization of our fragile mortal condition, we can reach out in freedom to the creator

<sup>20</sup> *Op. cit.*, page 87.

and re-creator of life and respond to his gifts with gratitude.<sup>21</sup>

What Nouwen says of the paradox of prayer is very similar to the paradox of managing ministry. When we can see all ministry as gift rather than entitlement, when we realize our dependence on our colleagues in ministry, when we know that although our personal ministry will end, God's care for persons will continue far beyond our limited efforts; then, we can thank God for the ministry we have had and rejoice in our opportunities to have served in new and different ways . . . even as ministers in management.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, page 89.



# **Christian Meditation: A Personal Sharing**

**Janet J. Janovec**

As soon as man is fully disposed to be alone with God, he is alone with God no matter where he may be—in the country, the monastery, the woods or the city. The lightning flashes from east to west, illuminating the whole horizon and striking where it pleases and at the same instant the infinite liberty of God flashes in the depths of the a man's soul, and he is illumined. At that moment he sees that though he seems to be in the middle of his journey, he has already arrived at the end. For the life of grace on earth is the beginning of the life of glory. Although he is a traveller in time, he has opened his eyes, for a moment, in eternity.

*Thoughts in Solitude*  
Thomas Merton

I am not a contemplative. I rarely have the time. Nor am I so inclined. Don't get me wrong; I've tried, but my determination has lasted no more than a few days at best. Beyond that time, I yearn to get back into the world again. I have always been greatly impressed with those who can spend weeks at a time caught up in such things and there was usually a pang of guilt because I couldn't comfortably

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do the same. I now appreciate the fact that God makes all of us quite different. I am not a contemplative. For the most part, I am painfully pragmatic and “agenda-oriented.”

My journey inward is as personal as the fingerprint I wear, and what works for me may not work for you. Although the goal of various meditation techniques is the same—the seeking of a unity and wholeness beyond oneself—there doesn’t seem to be a universal approach to meditation. Much of my own formula and methodology has come from trial and error. I have adapted some classical techniques and created a few of my own. There are two books which have acted as springboards for me: *Sadhana, A Way to God for Today* by Anthony de Mello and *Quiet Places With Jesus* by Isaias Powers. I find it useful to think of my own journey in meditation by dividing it into four stages: the physical stage, the cognitive stage, the subconscious stage and one that I simply call the stage of awe.

The physical stage deals not only with the physical setting but also our physical nature. I try to find a place that is quiet and out of the normal traffic pattern at home. A soft leather chair in a quiet corner of the living room is special to me. It’s near a window and next to the stereo. I try to find the time for meditation early in the morning when the house is quiet. I use headphones for the stereo so I won’t worry about the volume disturbing the rest of the household. On the coffee table before me, I have my Bible, a notebook, a book of devotions and a few pencils. I use a pencil rather than a pen to make notes because they don’t leak or run out of ink. I tried a felt-tip pen for a while but was distracted by putting the cap on after I was finished writing. Even though this is a minor distraction, it is still a distraction. When I finally settle into the chair, I don’t want to get up again for any reason. While this is a setting which I find most comfortable, meditation can “happen” anywhere.

One prime criteria for the successful meditation is that you allow enough time for journey. Even though meditation between agendas is probably more acceptable than no meditation at all, I find that my mind races toward the next appointment or function. Allow plenty of space, and allow plenty of time.

It is amazing how many new insights are gained when the body is relaxed. “Be Still and Know” is an admonition worth heeding. There are two aids to meditation which I have found very useful; music and controlled breathing. It has been proven that music generates an almost total body response. The music I like for meditation has an ethereal quality about it. It has echo or reverb properties usually found in instruments like the flute, the electric piano, or harp. It has no obvious melodic line or strong progression toward resolution. If I begin to expect the next note or series of notes, my mind is not able to “drift;” I’ll be anticipating the period at the end of the musical sentence. Music which conforms to the

natural heartbeat is more relaxing than music which directly opposes the natural rhythm. One beat per second is the usual formula.

Controlled breathing is an almost guaranteed technique for slowing the heartbeat, for removing stressors and for becoming “still.” There are other approaches, but I have found this one particularly useful for me. I inhale deeply for a 7 second interval and then exhale for an 8 second interval. I do this for two minutes; four complete breathing cycles per minute. Try it. It may take time to learn to pace your breathing. You may wish to use a watch with a second hand at first. Once you have mastered the timing, close your eyes and imagine that the room is permeated with light. This light represents God. Now your controlled breathing can take on a deeper meaning. As you inhale deeply, visualize the Spirit filling your body with His energy, power and light; it is as if you are inhaling God. As you exhale, visualize all of your negative emotions, fears, and impurities being expelled. Do this over and over again until you feel your body filled with His presence. Stay with this experience as long as you can. By “breathing God,” you are physically yearning for His presence each time you inhale.

As my breathing becomes slower and more paced, my mind becomes more active. It is almost as if the energy used for bodily motion has been rechanneled into my mind. Thoughts begin to dart back and forth like undisciplined children. This is the beginning of the cognitive stage. I begin to re-direct my thinking through the use of a devotional or a Scripture passage. Most of the time I begin repeating parts of Psalm 139. It is a psalm of assurance; and for me it is an assurance that this meditation is led by the Lord. Any new truths and insights are given by a loving God for my growth.

In studying Scripture, I vacillate between two approaches which work best for me. Both are old and proven. The first is Benedictine and includes three categories: “lectio” or sacred reading, “meditatio” or meditation, and “oratio” or prayer. If there has been a passage of Scripture that has come to mind over and over again during the previous day, then I will begin with that passage. Otherwise I use a lectionary. I read until there is a verse or word that catches my interest. I then stop my reading and concentrate on the verse. I may repeat it over and over again until I glean some new insight from it. I may inflect different words in the sentence to create new meaning. I begin to reflect on the new truths which present themselves and ask how this new meaning impacts on my life. I digest the thoughts; perhaps write down the new insights; and then I continue to read.

Ignatian Contemplation is another approach which makes Scripture “come alive” for me. I find this approach powerful because I am a visual person. I remember visually; I speak visually. As I close my eyes after reading a particular passage, I attempt to re-create the

entire scene in my mind's eye. Not only do I re-create the scene, but I am an active participant in the story. As the producer and director, I set the stage, arrange the props, and choose the cast of characters. The imagery becomes more intense as I use all of my senses.

I can hear the crowds in Jerusalem as they draw near to Jesus; I feel the heat reflecting from the temple steps; I can smell the stabled animals nearby. The business and bazaar noises are usually a part of the background noises. What I can descriptively touch, feel, hear, taste or see in my mind, creates a powerful backdrop. The people: young, old, crippled, blind . . . mothers, children, businessmen . . . faithful and skeptical are all actively described in my mind's eye. The play is ready to begin; all are awaiting the appearance of the Christ.

As Jesus appears, I begin to describe him to the blind man next to me. I watch everything he does; how he talks, how he walks, his gestures and his way of walking. I observe the crowds and describe them in detail. If the passage describes a healing, I take note not only of the reaction of the man or woman who is healed but also of the reaction of the crowd. I try to get in touch with my own reaction. Since I am also a part of the story, Jesus approaches me. He knows that I am visiting from another century because he knows all about me. He asks me about what has just happened. He asks for my feelings and thoughts, and I try to get in touch with both as I respond. As He turns to leave, Jesus may ask if there is anything which I would like to share with Him. I linger with this scene as long as I can and thank God for the insights.

Because I am such a visual person, guided imagery is a powerful tool which I employ not only in stage two, the cognitive stage, but also in stage three, the subconscious stage. Much of what is addressed in this stage comes from past experiences both good and bad which cause me to act the way I do. In this stage I begin to relinquish control. In stages one and two, I control the logistics, my body and my mind. In stage three, God becomes more than an observer. It is He who sets the stage for greater insight. This can be particularly frightening for those who want to be in charge and who have not yet learned that vulnerability is not the same as weakness. In stage three God becomes more pro-active, but at no time does God force me to do anything. He is present as a loving, accepting friend.

Although I do most of my spiritual battling in this stage, I am comfortable in knowing the war has already been won and I have nothing to fear. Again, I am able to set part of the stage. One of the techniques used in relaxation therapy is the ability to create or remember a special location from our past where we have felt closest to God, most safe, most loved, and most at peace. It is a "place" occupied only by us and by those whom we choose to invite. It is a

place protected from worldly intrusion, available to us anytime we choose, and where the Lord, too, is always a welcomed guest.

Think about a spot that is meaningful to you and describe it in your imagination with as much detail as you can. My special place is a grassy hillside overlooking a beach near Carmel, California. Using all of my senses, I imagine the feel of the sun penetrating through my sweater as I sit on the grassy hillside. The cool ocean breeze gently touches my hair. The clear cloudless sky is a fitting backdrop for the sea gulls that play over the water. I can hear the waves as they beat against the rocks. Only the cry of a sea gull punctuates these rhythms. As I look away from the beach, I can see in the distance other hills covered with yellow mustard and dotted with gnarled trees and a few shrubs.

Jesus is present here by invitation only, and He is with me now. I sense that He is a few feet behind me, but I seldom see him. At other times we are walking the beach together. He is next to me, but I don't see His face. This is the 20th century Christ, if you will, who knows all about traffic jams and levi jeans and computers. Because he is so much aware of my lifestyle, it is easy to share my feelings with him. All of the problems and frustrations of the day are voiced to a willing listener. At times there is a name, a person, or an incident from my life which repeats itself over and over again in my mind. I may re-live the incident again but this time with a third observer. Jesus observes the situation from a seemingly different perspective and shares those insights. At times, He is brutally honest but always loving. It seems as if Jesus is gently peeling away the veneer of piety and sophistication that I seem to think is so important to me. Martin Luther, when asked the first tenant of good praying said: "Don't lie to God." As I address my hurts and fears and my own sin, stage three becomes my prayer of confession.

The scene shifts. Again I am in the presence of the 20th century Christ but now we are walking on a hilly path in Yugoslavia near a small village where my grandparents were born. Along the path are a few white wayside chapels; none very large but all possessing their own kind of reverence. It is near dusk as Jesus and I enter one of the chapels. I sit in a pew near the back and watch as He begins praying to God on my behalf. The prayer is very specific and very personal. As Jesus finishes, He turns to me and asks if I would like to also approach God in this way. As I kneel where He has knelt, I can sense His presence behind me. At times He puts His hands on my shoulders; at other times He lays His hands on my head in blessing. At all times, He affirms me, and encourages me to draw even closer to God.

What I have described to you as illustrative of my meditation and prayer life, doesn't happen all of the time. The stages weave back and forth in my meditation and are not always easily definable.

I find that I cannot experience the deep pleasure of my relationship with God when I am trying to somehow compensate in my spiritual life with a very real and deep pain. Yet, it is precisely in this stage where I can face pain and buried terrors and begin my confession, catharsis, and healing. Paul Tillich described this interior phenomenon of pain very well.

Something in us prevents us from remembering when remembering proves too difficult or painful. We forget benefits because the burden of gratitude is too heavy for us. We forget former loves because the burden of obligations implied by them surpasses our strength. We forget our former hates because the task of nourishing them would disrupt our mind. We forget pain because it is still too painful. We forget guilt because we cannot endure its sting. Such forgetting is not the natural daily form of forgetting . . . we repress what we cannot stand. We forget it by entombing it within us . . . the memory is buried within us and influences every moment of our growth.

*The Eternal Now*  
Paul Tillich

A very personal story illustrates this point about pain. I laid my cousin to rest last November, but she had been dead 21 years. For 21 years I could not come to grips with the fact that a loving God would allow an accident to wrench her out of my life. For some twenty years I silently screamed within myself, "This is unfair!" But I never felt that I could address God whom I thought had orchestrated this tragedy. The accident provoked two thoughts in my subconscious psychic defense scheme: first, "Don't ever love that intensely or deeply again . . . always keep a little love in reserve just in case another accident occurs." Secondly, "Don't ever let God get that angry at you."

Looking back at the incident which is now distanced by maturity and time and meditation, I regret all of the barriers I put up with those who dared to draw close to me. I also regret not understanding better the ways of a loving God. For me, it took the one whom I know on the hillside in Carmel and the chapel in Yugoslavia to release me from the shackles of fear that I had been carrying around for two decades. The hurt child in each of us; the one who is anxious or afraid, has its own agenda. And yet, it is the child in each of us that God actively seeks to love.

In the first three stages of meditation, we have progressively released control of our bodies, minds and emotions into the hands of

a loving God. We have breathed God and walked with him in Jerusalem and California. We have invited Him to be master of our lives. We have, in many respects, gradually died to the ways of the world and opened up for ourselves new channels of communication.

The fourth stage of meditation, I have labeled “awe.” It is not a stage of control but rather a stage of response. In his book *The Psychology of Spirituality*, Benedict J. Groeschel divides faith or religious growth into three categories. The first category describes a faith that is practiced by children of all ages. The child in each of us attempts to control God through prayers of supplication or good works in order to reap some unwritten benefits. It is a game of reciprocity; “If I’m nice to you; you’ll be good to me.” When we find that the game doesn’t work; that the good guys sometimes finish last or not at all, we sometimes become bitter and disillusioned. The second category is the adolescent approach and is readily found on university and seminary campuses. This stage attempts to control God by speculative and intellectual means. Most of us have been here at one time or another; forever defining and redefining God in a clumsy attempt at control. A faith which does not progress beyond this point becomes stale and pedantic in later life.

There is not much power or love in a God who is boxed, wrapped and shelved. Groeschel’s “adolescent” stage and our “cognitive” stages are closely linked. When we refocus the conscious stage toward God, we release intellectual control. The third and highest stage for Groeschel is the “adult” stage which implies a dying to self. The “awe” and the “adult” stages are those of response and not of control.

It is difficult to intellectualize journeys of the heart and so I leave stage four open-ended. Not all meditation culminates in an awesome response. God does not appear on command. I have tried in this short article to set the stage for a deeper experience with God. Caught up in His love; words become a cheap commodity. I just “know” . . . I simply “know.” Meditation is a time when “just for a moment, I have opened my eyes in eternity.”

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# **“III Thessalonians”**

**Robert C. Stroud**

*[This text is said to have been recently discovered in the library of the isolated Orthodox monastery of St. Daniel the Stylite, high in the Balkan Mountains of Greece. The “translator” makes no claim as to Pauline authorship of the epistle, a matter to be decided by the individual reader. Nevertheless, the subject matter of the letter is thought-provoking, and is said to bear the characteristic stamp of the Scriptures—in that it is as timely today as when it was composed. Translator’s note: chapter and verse divisions, as well as the various section headings, are my own.]*

## **Greetings and Exhortation to Press On in Discipleship**

I. 1. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the church of the Thessalonians, in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2. Grace and peace to you through the abiding presence of our Lord’s own Holy Spirit. 3. We continue always to give thanks for you and for your faithfulness to the gospel of Christ. We continually remember you and your deep conviction in the service of our Savior. 4. Seeing the model you have become for the other churches of Macedonia affirms the truth that our ministry among you was not a failure. 5. Your steadfast testimony is an encouragement to us as we await word of the Lord’s will for us here in Rome. 6. Continue to pray for us, as we pray without ceasing for you, not simply that the life of these frail bodies might be preserved, but rather that whatever may come, the Lord will count us worthy of his name, and that through our own testimony, our heavenly Father

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might be glorified. 7. Even as by his own lifting up onto the cross our brother Cephas has continued to draw men to our Savior,<sup>1</sup> we beseech God to bring us also to a successful completion of the race of faith. 8. Looking not to the threats or cares of this world, we encourage you instead to keep your eyes upon Christ Jesus and his calling. 9. Whatsoever is true, holy, pure and blameless—if you would seek encouragement—think on these things. 10. Put into practice those things which you learned from us when we were among you, that you might not be disappointed when the day of the Lord arrives. 11. That great and glorious day which approaches ever nearer, even as the principalities of this world thrash about in violence, knowing that their own final destiny is sealed.

### The Epistle's Purpose and Paul's Call for Harmony

II.1 As always, it is good to hear from you. 2. Though we are prevented from being with you in body, your desire to seek our counsel confirms that we remain with you in spirit. 3. Continue to stand fast in the hope of the gospel, as you have done from the first day until now. 4. The crown of life has been laid aside for you, and awaits you in a place where neither moth nor rust can corrupt its purity. Press on, and we alongside you, in this race which ever more closely nears its conclusion. 5. In your letter you related concern over the matter of military service for the followers of our Lord Jesus, a question which sadly divides some in your midst. 6. Be one in heart and spirit, knowing with certainty that Christ is Lord over all. 7. Be patient with one another, remembering that as we together call in faith upon the name of God, we may not always agree upon his leading for our individual lives. 8. More than once, I have known the sorrow which grows from such differences of leading. 9. In these days, let your love for one another prevail, following my own example of praying a blessing for one another even as I did on that day when the Lord led Barnabas and myself in different directions.<sup>2</sup> 10. Do not insist upon total agreement, but in love, seek to serve one another. 11. Bring joy to us who have proclaimed the good news among you, by being yoked one to another in the grace and peace of our Father. 12. Coming now to us, as you have so often in the past, with your questions, we address your particular concerns, keeping foremost in our thoughts our need to glorify our Lord by loving

<sup>1</sup> Christian tradition has held from early times that the Apostle Peter was martyred through a reversed form of crucifixion (*i.e.* with his head at the foot of the cross). By tradition the first bishop of Rome, it was in this very city that Peter sealed his testimony for Christ with his own blood.

<sup>2</sup> These words are apparently a reference to the sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas over whether Mark should be allowed to rejoin them. Their difference of opinion was so great as to cause them to separate and travel in different directions (*Acts 15:36f*).

unity rather than to shame him through spiteful division. 13. Woe be to those who rend apart the body of Christ with petty desires and evil motives. 14. Strive instead for acceptance based not upon agreement on secondary matters, but established solidly upon common relationship with our Redeemer.

### **The Necessity of Absolute Devotion to Christ**

III.1. Insofar as you do not agree upon the proper relationship of a believer to a military commitment, we share with you the following words: 2. In all states of life, keep your devotion to Christ Jesus at the forefront. 3. In no situations, allow yourselves to be ensnared by the cares of this world which seek to strangle the new life within you and thwart, if that were possible, the will of God. 4. Brothers, we ask you to see the truth that we can serve our Lord wherever we might find ourselves. 5. Is there anyplace where we can be separated from the sight of our God? 6. If every spiritual principality at the command of the Lord of this world, and even death itself, cannot hope to defeat the elect of God, how can the simple wearing of a military uniform separate us from God's love? 7. The question is not whether membership in the army of Rome separates one from participation in the life of the church, 8. but rather the question is in what way is a follower of the Christ set apart from his godless fellows even as he shares their uniform and military charge? 9. For certainly, if he is no different from his pagan peers who steal from the defenseless, spend their nights in drunkenness, join themselves to unclean camp followers and delight in the suffering of their enemies, how can it be said that the light of Christ shines in him? 10. Yet, if he is noted for intercession for the poor, if he is recognized for his mercy toward enemies, if his life reflects a purity and righteousness foreign to that of his fellows, how great a witness his life might be in their presence. 11. For, how are they to believe without hearing, and how are they to hear without a messenger? 12. Thus, the question is not whether a soldier may be a Christian, but rather whether a believer's faith might be so secure that it might continue strong even in a trying environment.

### **Our Spiritual Warfare**

IV.1. After all, have you not heard me remind you time and again that we are all in truth soldiers of Christ? 2. Engaged in a warfare even of infinitely greater significance and violence than any Rome has ever waged. 3. As I have recently reminded the saints in Ephesus, so I now remind you as well: Put on the whole armor provided by God. 4. For what soldier approaches the battlefield without all of the equipment he will need for his survival and victory? 5. Don the helmet of salvation, and carry before you the shield of faith. 6. Gird

your waist with the belt of truth, and securely attach the breastplate of righteousness. 7. Rely confidently in your battles, upon the sword of the Spirit, which is the dependable word of God. 8. And wear prominently upon your helmet the crest of love and mercy, by which all of the soldiers of God are distinguished from their adversaries. 9. All of us, by virtue of our calling as disciples, have entered into a battle. 10. Put on the full armor of God so that you might be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11. Moreover, if this armor is necessary for all believers, how much more so is it required for those who find themselves in the service of the emperor? 12. These should apply themselves resolutely to maintaining their spiritual armor with even greater attention than they devote to their worldly armor, polishing it so that it gleams with the glory and purity of their Lord, and sharpening their swords so that their ability to wield them will not be found wanting in their hour of need.

### Examples of Righteous Soldiers

V.1. Dear children, for I rightly consider you my sons in the faith, the question you are asking is not yours alone. 2. Short days past I received a similar letter from our good friend Publius on the island of Malta.<sup>3</sup> 3. Our brother is pondering the appropriateness of continuing to serve in uniform as Rome's regent in Rome while he now considers himself conscripted into a far more glorious army. 4. I remind you, as I reminded Publius and his household, that the history of God's people is filled with examples of righteous soldiers. 5. Did not the Lord himself raise up David to fight as his champion, while David was yet too young in the eyes of the world to join the ranks of Israel's army? 6. Were not soldiers of Rome even counted among the followers of Jesus? 7. When did our Lord tell them to lay aside their swords and their military trusts? 8. Instead, our Lord challenged us to love the Father with all our heart, soul and mind. 9. Then, serving God with the whole of our devotion, the other aspects of our lives will find their proper place. 10. As Jesus taught us to render unto Caesar that which is rightfully his, he taught that Caesar's dictates are to be heeded, as long as they do not contradict that which is required of us by our God. 11. I have been pondering these very words of our Lord in the frequent solitude of my cell in recent days. 12. To offer Caesar his rightful due, without allowing him to usurp that throne which only God may occupy, is no simple task. 13. It is as though we are citizens at one and the same time of two different lands, members of a holy city, while at the same time

<sup>3</sup> Paul refers here to the chief Roman official on the island of Malta, which was considered a portion of the province of Sicily. When shipwrecked there on his final journey to Rome as a prisoner, Publius offered Paul warm hospitality. This passage suggests that Paul's healing of his father, as well as the words shared during their three day acquaintance, bore fruit.

sojourners in this present world. 14. To each of these lands we owe a certain debt, though these debts must not be confused. 15. These words I share not as from the Lord, but from my own present reflection. 16. It appears to me that although we owe our ultimate allegiance to our God, as members of communities in this world as well, we . . . certain loyalties . . . [Unfortunately, here we encounter the text's only lacuna. From the page breaks, it appears to run for eleven to thirteen lines, roughly the equivalent of one half of a chapter as enumerated in this translation.]<sup>4</sup>

### **Christians in Military Service and Paul's Approaching Fate**

VI.1. As to the question of whether a Christian may possibly serve faithfully in the military, the answer I offer is a reserved yes. 2. As to whether a believer should voluntarily enlist in the military, after already coming to faith, I would counsel against it.<sup>5</sup> 3. Quite simply, a Christian in uniform has increasingly greater likelihood of being forced to offer sacrifices to the human emperor as each day passes. 4. Not content to rule in their proper place over the earthly lives and property of men, some in the present age have become so corrupt that they have required others to offer worship to them. 5. No greater evidence exists that the day of our Lord is fast approaching. 6. The time is coming when all in the service of the emperor may be required to offer homage in the form of worship to their leige. 7. Such action constitutes nothing less than idolatry, breaking the first commandment, upon which all of the others rest. 8. Those who set themselves up as divine in nature, and deserving of human worship, are destined for destruction. 9. All people, including those here in Caesar's own household, recognize the lie. 10. No, do not worry for me that this humble citizen of Rome shall be condemned by these seemingly treasonous words, for my fate is already sealed. 11. Word has already come that the noble emperor Nero has determined that I shall be able to witness to our Lord with the shedding of my blood. 12. With some regret, due to my citizenship, I shall not be able to share a death on the tree in the model of our Lord, as did our brother Cephas a short time ago. 13. It was a glorious day when he was raised up upon a cross, thanking his executors for allowing him to join his Savior in a death like his. 14. Although they were amazed by his request, they did agree to invert the cross so that he might

<sup>4</sup> It is particularly unfortunate that the manuscript is corrupt at this specific juncture. One wonders exactly what point the author was desiring to make. It is tempting for one acquainted with Augustine's *City of God* or Luther's *Two Kingdoms* theology to read more into the passage than is inherently present. All such speculation is conjecture.

<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting here that the duration of the standard enlistment in the Roman army during the first century was twenty years (twenty-five for those enlisting in Rome's auxiliary forces).

acknowledge his own unworthiness to share fully the suffering of Christ. 15. I have heard from my own guards that those who witnessed his death that day were deeply touched, and some have already sought out the brethren to learn more of what could move a man to bless and pray for his murderers even as they brought his own life to a terrible end. 16. In this manner, as we witness to the Lord with our death, as well as with our lives, God uses the very instrument with which they strive to destroy the church to bless it and cause its increase.<sup>6</sup>

## Who Knows What the Future Will Bring?

VII.1. Returning to the matter of idolatry as a required dimension of the military life, I express my concern that the day may be coming when all those who serve in the army are required to choose between worshiping the living God or a pale, corrupt human counterfeit. 2. On that day all will know what it means that one cannot serve both God and man. 3. Why do I urge you to avoid voluntary military service? Because taking up arms, even in the defense of our home and family is wrong? 4. Did not our Lord himself count soldiers among his followers without requiring them to lay aside their charge? 5. When John the Baptizer prepared the way for our Lord, what was it he required the soldiers whom he baptized to do as a fruit of their repentance? Did John demand that they lay down their arms, or did he tell them to discharge their duties with integrity and mercy? 7. Do I urge you to avoid entanglement with the armies of this world because of the worldly atmosphere which will surround one? 8. Certainly we should avoid placing ourselves in temptation, yet we are to remain within a fallen world, even though we do not belong to it. 9. Where can the light of Christ shine more brightly than in the darkness of the world? 10. In truth, a bold witness to our Christ Jesus may be nowhere more needed than in the military. 11. Does my counsel arise from a belief that military service is inherently evil and contrary to the gospel? 12. No; there may indeed come a day when the armies of Rome are harnessed by God for a divine purpose. 13. What great glory might result for God if the empire were devoted to defense of the weak, care for the destitute and ill, education of the poor, and security and peace which would allow the greater spread of the good news. 14. This is the very reason I have urged you, and all churches, to pray for those in authority over you, that all people might live in peace. 15. Would that some day the so-called Peace of Rome might offer true peace to all peoples, on behalf of the Prince of Peace. 16. May there come a day when those in charge are servants of Christ, leading her armies with righteousness in the cause

<sup>6</sup> The writer's sentiment here foreshadows Tertullian's familiar observation that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

of good. 17. Although the gospel will not fully triumph in this world until the day of our Lord, we rightfully pray for those days when men of righteousness will rule over us.

## The Final Decision Remains with the Individual

VIII.1. It is in my power as an apostle of Christ to command you to avoid voluntary military service, but this I do not do. 2. For there are those who have maintained their faithfulness to Christ (whether through the laxity of their overseers or divine intercession). 3. Still, no one can know when they may be confronted with the demand of a superior officer to commit idolatry, by worshiping a man, living or dead. 4. Mark my words, that should such a day come, on that day your very salvation will hang in the balance.<sup>7</sup> 5. On that day, you will have further opportunity to share in the sufferings of our Savior, by which you have previously become a model for the churches in Macedonia and Achaea.

## God Loves All and further Warnings Against Idolatry

IX.1. Among those who have called upon the name of Christ, we count a number of soldiers, men who have violated the trust of neither Rome, nor their Lord. 2. Not least among these are our dear brother Cornelius of Caesarea and the beloved centurian Justus who endowed the first church in Capernaum, just as he had established the synagogue there while a gentile believer. 3. These men <sup>8</sup> were able to faithfully fulfill their secular responsibilities without compromising their utter devotion to our Savior. 4. In truth, some here in Rome are indebted to each of these soldiers of Christ for the way in which they learned of our Savior's love while serving with them in Judea. 5. To wear the uniform of a soldier is neither right nor wrong, for indeed, God is no respecter of persons. 6. I repeat the words shared when last I was among you: it is best to remain in the state in which you were called. 7. If a soldier, then remain such until the fulfillment of your enlistment. 8. If a civilian, then do not voluntarily submit yourself to the unique demands of the military life with its increasingly frequent calls for its soldiers to do obesience before a self-proclaimed god. 9. For those already under the authority of Rome's standards, I exhort you to remain faithful to Christ. 10. Render unto Caesar that which God ordains is his to demand. 11. But never offer unto him that which only God has the right to

<sup>7</sup> Such a day came for individuals like Saints Marinus (ca.A.D. 260), Marcellus (A.D. 298) and Dasius (A.D. 303). The stories of these and other martyrs of the early church make fascinating and edifying reading.

<sup>8</sup> Cornelius and his relationship to the early church is described in *Acts* 10. The second centurian, referred to as Justus, is clearly the unnamed soldier whose faith and recognition of authority Jesus highly praised (*Matthew* 8:5-13 and *Luke* 7:1-10).

possess—your worship. 12. Better to lose your mortal life, than to forfeit your eternal life.

### A Vision for the Future of the City of Thessalonica

X.I. I wish to share with you a vision for your benefit in future days. 2. Without boasting, I share with you that in my hour of need as I prepare for my martyrdom, I was caught up into heaven, whether in the body or not, I do not know. 3. Among the things revealed to me there was a word regarding the future of your city, so dear to my heart. 4. I saw a powerful man, sitting upon the emperor's throne, one who also counted himself among the saints of God. 5. In his great rage at Thessalonica's disrespect for his rule, his armies were sent against her walls, and thousands of her citizens were slaughtered. 6. But here begins the mystery. 7. In remorse for his violent actions, this man of God publicly confesses his sin and seeks the forgiveness of God and those against whom he has sinned. 8. Thus, despite the tears which must be shed, God is glorified and the city restored. 9. I grow ever more in awe of the wonder and mercy of our God. 10. I thank my God for this vision and the opportunity to share it with you in the hour before it comes to pass, so that your Church which occupies so special a place in my heart might be prepared. 11. And I also thank my Lord that he has preserved me from becoming conceited about such revelations by allowing me the privilege of carrying my infirmity, 12. which he even now prepares to deliver me from in providing me a new body, like unto that possessed by our Lord since his resurrection.<sup>9</sup>

### Final Greetings

XI.1. Beloved friends, it may seem to you that I have belabored the point in answer to your question, but I have merely sought to make as clear as possible a troubling matter. 2. I long to be with you in the flesh, but as that is not possible, rest assured that I am with you in heart and spirit as you read my words. 3. Finally, fellow workers, see how I pen these words with my own hand. 4. To know and serve Christ Jesus is to learn contentment and to inherit peace. 5. Join with me in sharing the suffering of our Lord as we strive together toward the heavenly goal he has laid up before us. 6. The measureless grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

<sup>9</sup> This amazing vision, which will be used by some in an attempt to date the writing after the event, obviously refers to the encounter between Theodosius I and Bishop Ambrose of Milan. Following his impetuous slaughter of seven thousand citizens of Thessalonica, Ambrose demanded that the emperor do public penance before being readmitted to the church. The ruler, who championed orthodoxy (in opposition to arianism) reluctantly complied.

# **A Journey To Centering Prayer**

**James F. Kleffman**

For the chaplain the morning begins with the commanding officer who drops into the chapel and says, "Please be prepared to give a presentation on stress management to the headquarters staff early next week." Twenty minutes later a senior chaplain of a different denomination says, "We have an ecumenical memorial service for one of our units tomorrow morning. You are in charge." Before those challenging words have died away, a subordinate chaplain of still another denomination asks, "How are we going to provide denominational coverage Sunday when most of our chaplains will be out in the field?" Even before the question can be considered, a call comes from the post hospital requesting a Catholic chaplain to come immediately to administer the Anointing of the Sick to a seriously ill patient and to care for the patient's family. Meanwhile, representatives from a number of smaller faith groups are waiting to see the chaplain to request that they be included in an already crowded chapel schedule of Sunday worship.

On any major Army post, whether here or overseas, the office of the chaplain is frequently the scene of hectic and stressful activity. No ministry is more ecumenical, diverse, or all-encompassing than the Army chaplaincy. With this diversity of denominations and faith groups, military chaplains are challenged in ways that their civilian counterparts do not know. The challenge "to be all things to all men" is part and parcel of the chaplaincy. I know of only one way to meet the challenge or to deal with the stress. For me, the answer is prayer.

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In her article, "Chaplains in Search of Excellence," Agnes Taylor speaks to this point.

The chaplain has a unique mission to perform for the Army. To the extent that the chaplain keeps his eye on his primary role, the chaplain is successful. The source of the chaplain's influence is in the religious role within the worshiping community. Here the chaplain gains credibility; here the role of the chaplain is validated. Chaplains sometimes fail to recognize the importance of their function as the voice of religion and morality within the Army. The successful chaplain recognizes this role; the chaplain "sticks to the knitting."<sup>1</sup>

From my personal experience of some years in the Army chaplaincy, the words of Agnes Taylor are valid beyond question. Unless the chaplain "sticks to the knitting," the chaplain becomes something less than even just another Army officer. If the chaplain does not keep his eye on his primary goal, he simply cannot minister effectively. Personal experience has taught me that I cannot "stick to the knitting" unless I maintain a solid prayer life. A short personal anecdote will make this point clear.

## A Personal Story

Early in 1979, I decided to return to the Army chaplaincy. Some years before, I had served as an Army chaplain in Vietnam. In 1972, after Vietnam and four years of active duty, I was content to return to my diocese. But while happily working as a home town pastor, from time to time, I found my thoughts wandering back to my experiences in the chaplaincy. By the late 70s, I found that I was no longer viewing the Army chaplaincy with only Vietnam in mind. I remembered more and more of the positive aspects of the chaplaincy—travel, adventure, more personal freedom, younger parishioners, and the possibility of new challenges.

Being on the personnel board of my diocese, it was relatively easy for me to approach the board and my bishop with the request to return to the Army chaplaincy. Everyone was surprised at my request, and I was both surprised and pleased when they gave their approval. I made application and was accepted in May of 1979. I asked for an assignment to Germany and was sent to Worms. I was delighted.

<sup>1</sup> Agnes Taylor, *Chaplains in Search of Excellence* (C-20 Student Handout #02, Leadership and Managing Religious Programs, U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School, Fort Monmouth, N.J. 1986), 7.

At first, it felt very good to be back in the Army. I had always enjoyed travel and a variety of work. After a few months in Worms, however, a strange feeling came over me. After having served a large and active parish back in my diocese, I was suddenly asked to serve a very small congregation. I soon found I dearly missed the love and support that I had felt back at my home parish of St. Peter's in Council Bluffs, Iowa. I was lonely. At St. Peter's, I had enjoyed daily contact with fellow priests in the surrounding area. I had always maintained a very close relationship with my family. Now we were thousands of miles—an ocean and two continents—apart. A certain tension within me began to grow. I was depressed. In the past I had experienced some very real success in the priesthood. Now I felt like a flunkie. Being a 45-year-old captain in the Army did absolutely nothing for my ego. My self confidence was low; my pride was hurt. Even more than that, a chaplain with whom I had experienced some inter-personal difficulties in Vietnam became my supervisor.

In my "dark night," I gradually discovered both the necessity and the beauty of prayer. At an ordinary and regularly scheduled day of recollection in Frankfurt, the speaker encouraged the practice of centering prayer. It was a new word, a new concept, and a new experience for me. I quickly gathered all the information I could find about it. I carefully read and studied many different authors. Because of his clarity and simplicity of approach, the English monk Basil Pennington soon became my favorite authority on centering prayer.<sup>2</sup>

After a few false starts, the disciplined practice of centering prayer became a regular part of my life. Centering prayer made it possible for me to see some light in dark days and dark nights. I began, thanks to centering prayer, to experience some of the peace and joy which only God's love can bring. I came to realize how the practice of centering prayer was gradually making me a much more effective chaplain. Burdens became lighter, and my mission became clearer. With faithfulness to centering prayer, I was actually able to "Stick to the Knitting" and even to find happiness in my work. My ministry as an Army chaplain was alive and healthy again.

## Ministry In A Hospital Setting

After three years of ministry in Worms, I was assigned to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C. While serving as a ward chaplain in this assignment, my primary mission was to visit patients. Facing life and death situations every day, I soon came to realize that the patient has the right to expect much more from me than small talk. The chaplain must have something very special and

<sup>2</sup> Basil Pennington, *Centering Prayer* (Garden City, New York, Image Books, 1982)

uniquely valuable to offer. If this is not the case, what is the chaplain for?

During the fall of 1982, a holistic health workshop was held at Walter Reed. Dr. Herbert Benson, one of the speakers at the workshop, spoke of the many positive results which centering prayer can bring to persons in stress. The workshop gave me the encouragement I needed to reaffirm my daily commitment to centering prayer. It also encouraged me to begin to share this form of prayer with others.

Soon my goal was to share centering prayer with as many patients, who were open to the experience as possible. When introducing and sharing this form of prayer with patients, I gave special emphasis to the role of the patient in the process of healing. I tried first to determine if there were a certain "hunger" within the patient for God and for prayer. If the patient indicated a genuine interest, I would provide as much privacy as possible for our visit. Interruptions seemed to make it impossible to share something so sacred and so personal.

In my visit and discussion I emphasized that there is a very real partnership between the patient and the healing team. The patient, along with the doctors, nurses, chaplains and the entire staff must work together in order to receive the best possible treatment. The patient must not be merely passive. It is imperative that the patient be actively involved in the healing process. There is so much that only the patient can do to facilitate healing.

In the course of my visit, I pointed out that inner peace and deep relaxation promote a more positive attitude and that this often results in a more comprehensive and rapid healing process. Centering prayer brings inner peace and relaxation. I talked to them about my own method of centering prayer, taking as long as ten to fifteen minutes to demonstrate and to answer questions. At the end of the visit, I tried to elicit a commitment from the patient to try centering prayer.

I assured them that I, myself, have found this form of prayer most helpful, and that I hoped that they would find the same sense of peace and relaxation which the humble acknowledgement of God's presence can bring. Then I gave them a copy of a simple, step-by-step description of centering prayer. I assured them that I would visit them again, and that during my next visit, I would like to know their reaction to centering prayer.

Without exception, I found this type of visit created a very special atmosphere. Each visit was a time when the patient and I felt very close to each other. In my follow-up visits I always found myself to be welcomed, even if their experience of centering prayer was not all we had hoped it would be. Even on those occasions, I knew the healing power which is present when two people, deeply sharing their

faith and their experiences, acknowledge the power and the presence of God in their lives.

For more than three years, I shared centering prayer with hundreds of patients. No follow-up study was conducted. I have no idea how many former patients still remain faithful to centering prayer. I am content to know that my patients were extremely grateful to receive this simple form of prayer, and that many have spoken to me of its healing effect in their lives.

## A Basic Lesson

Perhaps the most basic lesson I have learned in the past few years, is this age old truth, *nemo dat quod non habet*, no one can give what they don't have. I lay no claim to a deep spirituality, but I do realize very clearly that I cannot effectively offer the gift of centering prayer to any other person unless I am faithful to the daily practice of it. I sometimes feel that the Good Lord has duped me into this form of prayer so that I might grow in faithfulness. At this point in my life, I find myself wanting to share my experience of centering prayer with any fellow chaplain who is open to the experience.

Centering prayer, by my definition, is a simple method for opening ourselves to experience the presence of God within our very selves. It is a method, or a technique, which relaxes us physically while renewing and refreshing us spiritually. It is relatively easy for us to make an academic act of faith. It is quite another thing for us to become so aware of God's presence that we actually experience it.

## Relaxing The Body

In order to enter into centering prayer, it is necessary first to quiet your body. Coming to a state of quiet and calm is essential. This means finding a quiet place where you will not be interrupted. This can be a special place in your home, in the privacy of your office, or simply any quiet place where you are not likely to be disturbed. The choice is yours.

In your quiet place, it is better to be seated in a comfortable straight-back chair. The goal is not to sleep, but to contemplate. Next, take a minute or so to relax your body. When Jesus said, "Come to me all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you" (*Matthew 11:28*), He certainly meant the whole person—body, soul, and spirit. The body is not likely to be refreshed if we begin prayer while we are still physically tense. Furthermore, the body is the source of countless distractions. If we take care of the body first, then we will be better able to focus on prayer itself.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Keating, *Finding Grace at the Center* (Still River, Mass. St. Bede Publications, 1978),11.

It is best to begin with deliberate relaxation movements of the body. Starting with the toes of the right foot, for example, become conscious of each of them, move them individually and relax them. Then do the same with the entire foot, relaxing every bone and muscle along the way. Then proceed upwards to each part of your right leg, becoming conscious of each of them while relaxing them individually with slow, deliberate movements. Then use the same process on the left leg. Then move up your entire body, becoming conscious of each part, exercising it gently and relaxing it until you reach the very top of your head.

Follow this relaxation activity with the conscious and deliberate taking of deep breaths. Exhale as slowly and as completely as possible. Breathe in and out as deeply as you can. Do this three or four times. Breathe out the tension that you may feel within your body.

At the completion of these simple procedures, remain seated in an upright position, with your feet flat on the floor and with your hands lying relaxed and open on your lap. Close your eyes. At this moment, your physical body should feel relaxed and calm.

## **The Presence Of God**

The next step is to acknowledge God's presence within you. You cannot make God present to yourself. He is, indeed, already and always present. You can, however, recognize and acknowledge His presence. To achieve this step, pray for the grace to let go of all bitterness, anxiety, and guilt. Unconditional love for everyone, yourself included, is your goal. This is simply not possible without God. You must want to become more conscious of God's presence so that your appreciation of His Love can grow within you. Take a moment to forgive anyone who may have hurt you in any way. Try to appreciate the wonderful fact that God lives in them as He lives in you, and try to love them as He loves them and you. Try to realize that God forgives them just as He forgives you. Let go of ill will so that you can be more open to God's presence within you at this very time and place.

Pray a short prayer acknowledging God's presence. Do this in your own words. For example, "Dear God, I believe that you are present and living within me at this very moment. I adore you. I love you. Stay with me always. Help me right now to recognize and to acknowledge your presence within my very self."

## **A Sacred Word Or Phrase**

The next step is to mentally repeat a sacred word or phrase over and over again. You may choose whatever sacred word or phrase is best suited to you. Centering prayer at this level, if properly understood

and practiced, crosses the lines separating denominations and faith groups. A Jewish person may wish to focus on the word *Shalom*. An Orthodox Christian may prefer *Kyrie eleison*. A Catholic or Protestant may prefer the holy name, *Jesus*. Some may prefer just a single word such as *God* or *Love* or *Abba*. Others may find that a phrase is more suited to them. For example, “*Jesus, Lord Jesus Christ.*” Often a person needs to experiment with various choices to find the one which seems most natural or most appealing.

The sacred word I tend to use in centering prayer is simply the name *Jesus*. With every inhaling breath I say to myself the name of *Jesus*; with every exhaling breath, I repeat the name, *Jesus*. My focus is only on my sacred word *Jesus*.

As you give yourself to this form of prayer, you will find yourself distracted from time to time. When distractions come, and they will, don’t try to fight them. Simply acknowledge them and return your focus to your sacred word or phrase. During this prayer, you try to accomplish absolutely nothing other than to be present and open to God. In this prayer, you seek only God; you seek nothing for yourself.

## Technique In Prayer

Techniques for prayer are common in the Catholic tradition. The rosary, for example, is a technique for prayer which has led many people to deep contemplative union with God. The Stations of the Cross is another technique of prayer which has come down to us over many centuries.

However, to some devout Christians who are not Catholic, the idea of using a technique or a method for communicating with God may seem repulsive. After all, some might say, the Christian is already given the privilege of knowing God personally without method or technique.

All true prayer, regardless of the technique of prayer, is a response to God and always begins with God. Every prayer is a response to a movement of grace whether we are explicitly aware of it or not. God, who is present in us and around us, is always calling us to respond to His presence. So radical is our dependence on Him that we cannot even desire to pray unless God draws us. Simply stated, it is impossible for us to “save” ourselves.<sup>4</sup>

## Sticking To The Knitting

Most authors recommend that a person spend 20 to 30 minutes devoted to centering prayer early in the morning. In later afternoon or early evening, another 20 to 30 minutes is recommended. I have

<sup>4</sup> Basil Pennington, *Daily We Touch Him* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1979) 51.

found it an excellent way to start my day. Army chapels are ordinarily quiet very, very early in the morning and are therefore ideal for centering prayer at the beginning of the day.

The rest of the day, however, is filled with hectic, diverse, and often stressful activities. My personal experience has convinced me that I can keep my focus on my primary role as chaplain only if I remain faithful in daily prayer. Centering prayer has become a most significant part of my daily prayer life. It helps me "Stick to the Knitting," and I think it will help you. I sincerely encourage you to try it.

# **Orthodox Mystical Tradition And The Comparative Study of Religion: An Experimental Synthesis**

**Alexander F. C. Webster**

This article is a speculative and experimental attempt to determine the broad parameters for a descriptive definition of “religion.” The designated audience for this definition is in the first instanced Orthodox Christian theologians, but it may useful for others as well.

I cannot emphasize the designated audience too much, for it is virtually axiomatic that a purely objective, universal definition of religion is not obtainable, given the rootedness of any theorist in his or her own subjective experience and historico-cultural context. In this sense, to borrow a phrase from the American historian Carl Becker, “every man is his or her own religionist” (that is, a student of comparative religion) or, at a different level, theologian. This view of the religionist, however, as “artist” rather than as “scientist” does not automatically raise the issue of personal belief as a prerequisite or disqualification for the study of religion, and I shall not discuss this problem here. But the presumption of subjectivity does mandate a less ambitious or grandiose objective—one that purports to offer *an explanation of religious experience from a self-consciously limited perspective*. Thus, it is well for the theologian of a particular tradition not to try to divest himself of the heritage in seeking to understand it in the broader context of religious experience. Indeed, the theologian would be better advised to grapple with religion on his or her home turf, as it were, by acknowledging the peculiar

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perspective as a door of opportunity, instead of a wall of obstruction, to a deeper knowledge of one's own tradition and of human religiousness in general.

The experimental nature of this enterprise also warrants introductory comment. Orthodox theologians and religionists who employ social scientific methods have not had much scholarly contact with one another. My impression is that the two collectivities are like ships passing in the night. Rarely is the Orthodox Traditions cited by religionists, and then hardly in a manner conducive to the self-understanding of adherents to this tradition. Similarly, few Orthodox theologians have utilized the methodologies and conceptual frameworks of the most respected religionists. This should come as no surprise, however, in light of the often reductionistic or syncretistic attempts by ostensibly "scientific" religionists or other scholars to "explain" religion on the basis of their own transparent ideological inclinations.

The present undertaking, therefore, though unabashedly Orthodox in its vantage point and concerns, will attempt to bridge this gap between Orthodoxy and the comparative study of religion, if ever so tenuously, by using the Orthodox Tradition as a test case for the work of three great religionists who, for the most part, are neither reductionistic nor syncretistic. Such a solitary field of applications can claim only a modest result in terms of ascertaining the universality of the theories in question. Orthodoxy provides a necessary but not sufficient measure of reliability for general definitions or explanations of religion. It is hoped, however, that the exercise will prove fruitful in serving both as a check on the utility of the theories of three great religionists and as a heretofore neglected means of illuminating certain aspects of the Orthodox mystical heritage. Out of this crucible of application and comparison should emerge also a deeper understanding—hence a revised descriptive definition—of human religiousness.

As a necessary precondition for this endeavor in keeping with the previous remarks about subjectivity, I should offer a brief explanation of the Orthodox perspective on "religion" as well as a preliminary statement of my own theoretical understanding of religion as an Orthodox theologian. Although their particular views on "other" religions or human religiousness "in general" depend to a large extent on their ecumenical postures, which in turn are grounded in specific ecclesiologies, Orthodox theologians seem to have reached a consensus in the matter of Orthodoxy *versus* religion.<sup>1</sup> In a manner

<sup>1</sup> The term "theologian" in Orthodoxy is not reserved for formal scholars or academics. Among the three Church Fathers officially honored by this title, only one was such a scholar—St. Gregory of Nazianzos. Indeed, in keeping with its Greek etymology, the term is applied to any person who "talks with God"—that is, any person whose spiritual life is such that he or she is continually perfecting his or her communion with God both intellectually in the sense of knowledge and, more

akin to that of the Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth and others in the neo-orthodox and evangelical wings of Protestant Christianity, Orthodox theologians proffer a dichotomy between their own religious tradition and all others on the basis of a decisive metaphysical-epistemological claim. Orthodoxy represents, contains, or offers the *fullness* of divine revelation, and all other religious traditions are more or less correct in their truth claims in comparison with this normative standard.<sup>2</sup>

The reasoning behind this seemingly audacious self-understanding is sound, given the major and minor premises that it presupposes. First, it is believed (in large part because it was originally experienced) that God—the ultimate object (and subject) of religion—has been revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. Through this unique and unrepeatable divine Incarnation all that is *ultimately* necessary for life on earth and beyond death, both in terms of doctrinal knowledge and meaningful human behavior, has been revealed by God. While men and women in their continual grasping or, better still, groping for meaning can be said to be seeking after the Creator, God has acted decisively to end this quest by seeking after His human creation through the Incarnation. Christ represents, therefore, the “end” of religion in both the teleological and temporal senses of the word. Second, the presence of this Christ is believed to continue organically and without interruption in the fellowship of those who endeavor to live His life. In ecclesiological terms, that is in the “Body of Christ” on earth, the Church. This organic metaphor from *I Corinthians* 12 is affirmed so fervently that no division or

importantly, transrationally through a self-surrendering openness or “transparency” to God’s communicative actions. In the present essay, therefore, I should prefer to use the term in its inclusive sense (*i.e.*, university-trained scholars, bishops and other clergy, and other persons who lead spiritual lives), but naturally the anticipated readership of this essay will be drawn most probably from the first two sub-groups.

<sup>2</sup> For this theme of “fullness” of revelation (*plerōma*), see, for example, Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1974), pp. 160f, and John Karmiris, *A Synopsis of the Dogmatic Theology of the Orthodox Catholic Church*, trans. George Dimopoulos (Scranton: Christian Orthodox Edition, 1973), p. 2. One concrete expression of this theme is Orthodoxy as a perfect spiritual-communal way of life grounded in the objective reality of God, which uniquely transfigures mundane creation. See Archbishop Ilarion Troitsky, *Christianity or the Church?* trans. Lev Puhalo and Vasili Navokshonoff (Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Monastery, 1971), p. 8; Dumitru Stanilose, *Theology and the Church*, trans. Robert Barringer (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1980), p. 218; and Georges Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology (Part One)*, trans. Robert L. Nichols (Belmont, Ma.: Nordland Publishing Company, 1979), p. xviii. A similar but more comprehensive argument appears in Nicholas Arseniev, *Revelation of Life Eternal* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1982), esp. pp. 13f, 15, 17f, 80f. Another refinement of the theme of fullness distinguishes Orthodox Tradition—the essential dogmatic truth as lived by the faithful—from mere human traditions, whether religious or cultural. See John Meyendorff, *Orthodoxy and Catholicity* (N.Y.: Sheed and Ward, 1966), p. 97.

schism can be allowed in the one Body of Christ. Consequently, the Orthodox Churches exclusively comprise this Body of Christ on earth in light of their uninterrupted continuity with the Tradition established by Jesus and His designated temporal vicars, the apostles and their successors, the bishops. The conclusion drawn from these two premises can be stated as follows: within the Orthodox Tradition alone may the person seeking after the ultimate meaning of life realize his or her goal, precisely because God has chosen this vehicle as the one perfect means of achieving personal communion with human persons.

If “religion” can be defined tentatively as the various forms and experiences of human striving for the ultimate divine reality, then Orthodoxy is not *a* religion, but rather a trans-religious opportunity for individuals, in a community firmly rooted in a historical but living Tradition to experience the true God who was reached down to people. This conclusion does not necessarily lead to a depreciation of all religious experiences outside Orthodoxy, much less to a categorical denial of validity to “the religions.” As the fullness of divine revelation, orthodoxy does not presume to claim, notwithstanding the possibly self-serving triumphalistic flavor of the fundamental dichotomy, that divine truth resides within the Orthodox Tradition alone, or that other religious experiences are void or worthless. For the Spirit of God, who “blows where He wills” (*John* 3:8), is not constrained even by God’s own providential promises or actions in history. Nor does the perfect revelation in Christ preclude other, albeit lesser, revelations before, during, or after the Incarnation as an historical event. Indeed, the consensus of Orthodox theologians through the centuries has expressed an openness to the presumably more or less limited value of the religious experiences available in heretical Christian traditions, Judaism, and other non-Christian religions. A classic example from the patristic era is St. Justin Martyr’s designation of Socrates, Hereclitos, Abraham, Elias, *et al.*, as “Christians” before Christ.<sup>3</sup> Less patronizing and still more appreciative of others’ religions are the personal positions of those orthodox theologians who are engaged in ecumenical “dialogues” with Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Southern Baptists, Reformed Protestants, Jews, and Muslims.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> St. Justin Martyr, *First Apology* xlvi. ET: *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, I, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (American Reprint of the Edinburgh Edition; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), p. 178. (Hereafter cited as *ANF*).

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Theodore Stylianopoulos, “Orthodoxy and Catholicism: A New Attempt at Dialogue,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, XXVI, No. 3 (Fall, 1981), 157-69. Entire issues of this journal devoted to such dialogues include XXII, No. 4 (Winter, 1977; XXIV, No. 4 (Winter, 1979); and XXVII, No. 1 (Spring, 1982). Agreed statements by the “official” international and U.S. Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue teams are printed periodically in *Diakonia*, the journal of John XXIII Center at Fordham University.

Given this Orthodoxy versus religion dichotomy, however, I prefer to treat it as an unhidden assumption that, for the sake of terminological convenience, remains inoperative because the Orthodox person, like his or her religious counterparts, also strives for God even while God “strives” for communion with him or her. Orthodox Tradition, despite its presumably divine origin and continuing inspiration by the indwelling Holy Spirit, exists in time and place, and therefore, it is subject, at least in part, to the vicissitudes of history and geography, thereby giving rise to observable features that may be compared to those of the “religions” properly speaking. Thus, while Orthodoxy from the particular confessional standpoint of this Orthodox theologian is not in the long run reducible to a religion, this Tradition will be considered as such for the practical purpose of examining it in dialogue with three great religionists.

My working definition of religion (including Orthodoxy with the caveat entered above) has represented heretofore an amalgam of insights drawn from several scholars with diverse professional interests and methodologies. The Protestant theist Paul Tillich informed my thinking through his definition of religion as “the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern.”<sup>5</sup> From this somewhat dispassionate, objective stand point, a religion could be described as the pursuit by an individual or a community of that which it values the most, whether transcendent, strictly immanent as in the case of “quasi-religions” such as nationalism, or somewhere between these antipodes. Since this approach, though highly useful in assessing religion as a motivational factor in human experience, tends to reduce religion to a function of explicit or implicit value theories, a more comprehensive approach is needed to complement it. As a way of fleshing out the logical structure and content of religion, I have borrowed constructs from political philosophy and the descriptive phenomenology of religion. Thus, any religion could be said to entail in schematic form four logical structural components<sup>6</sup> and a variety of phenomenological sub-categories.<sup>7</sup>

(1) A *Philosophy*, or worldview, which includes a *credo* (system or collection of beliefs, particularly about the nature of

<sup>5</sup> Paul Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* (N.Y.: Columbia U. Press, 1963), p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> This quadripartite typology is derived from John W. Chapman, “Political Theory: Logical Structure and Enduring Types,” Institut International de Philosophie Politique, *L'idée de Philosophie Politique* (“Annales de Philosophie Politique,” VI; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), pp. 57-62.

<sup>7</sup> For the idea of nine alliterative phenomenological criteria, I am indebted to Prof. Harvey Cox of Harvard Divinity School. I have modified, however, several of his categories and augmented his original total of seven. This phenomenological approach looms large in my unpublished essay, “The Anti-Semitism of Corneliu Z. Codreanu and the Romanian Legionary Movement: An Orthodox Christian Ethical Assessment.” Presented at the Tenth Annual Meeting of the Society for Romanian Studies in Kansas City, Mo., October 21-22, 1983.

reality and the cosmos); a *curse* (explanations or understanding of why the *is* is not the *ought*—that is, the chief problems of meaning including evil or theodicy, suffering and confusion, and non-believers); and a *canon* (standards by which truth is known such as rational principles, scriptures, authoritative personages, etc.).

(2) A *psychology*, or philosophy of human nature, which includes a *cause* pertaining to the motivating forces of human experience and the significance of history for that experience; a *career* history (myths or explanations of the origin, present status, and history of human creation both within and beyond the given religion); and a *champion* (role model(s) such as the founder of the religion, gods, heroes of faith, etc.);

(3) An *ethical theory*, or *code* of desired or mandated attitudes and behavior;

(4) *Institutions*, which embody all of the above and encompass, in particular, a *cultus* (rituals, specific material symbols, use of time and space); and a *community* (the composition and ordering of practitioners of the given religion).

## The Philosophical Psychology of Rudolf Otto

The first of the three major religionists whose perspectives on religion appear promising for an understanding of the Orthodox mystical heritage is Rudolf Otto, the German theologian-phenomenologist whose principal work, *The Idea of the Holy*, virtually defies categorization. Jan de Vries has acknowledged the predominant phenomenological dimension of this work but argues that Otto focused primarily on “the emotion of man when facing the “totally other” and so “we end up . . . in the realm of psychology.”<sup>8</sup> I am inclined to agree with this assessment, while observing also that Otto manifested an interest in philosophical phenomenology and a disposition toward metaphysics seldom shared by professional religionists, especially those who have not worn a theologian’s hat. Otto’s phenomenology is most evident in the Husserlian dialectic that undergirds his explication of religious experience: religious person (“knower”), “numen” or object of knowledge (“the thing known”), and the numinous experience (“act of knowing”).<sup>9</sup> Otto’s metaphysical assumptions, moreover, are by no means hidden. His affirmation of the objective reality (that is, prior to human subjectivity both chronologically and in terms of ultimate significance or value) of what he terms the “numen” or the “wholly other” is easily assimilated to the Christian theological concept of God; for this very reason, ironically, this metaphysical component of Otto’s theory has

<sup>8</sup> Jan de Vries, *Perspectives in the History of Religions*, trans. Kees W. Bolle (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1977), pp. 153f.

<sup>9</sup> For this insight I am indebted to William King, fellow doctoral student at the University of Pittsburgh.

proven controversial among religionists engaged in a search for a supposedly less biased standard for defining religious experience. Nevertheless, Otto's unmitigated emphasis on the experiential dimension of religion, particularly in terms of the non-rational (perhaps non-conceptual or, better still, supra-rational) and non-ethical feeling associated with it, may lead one to describe his theory as a "philosophical psychology of religion" that is particularly amenable to the *theological/metaphysical* aspects of orthodox mysticism.

Eschewing at once a cold scholastic rationalism and the inordinate stress of Schleiermacher on emotional feeling, Otto devised a new terminology for the religious as a *sui generis* experience that, inherently incapable of being taught or fully explained discursively, could only be "evoked" or "awakened in the mind."<sup>10</sup> The response to the "wholly other" or objective transcendent reality, which Otto termed the "numen" in order to avoid confusion with the ethical ramifications of the term "holy," is irreducible to any other human experience. Otto therefore found it necessary to attempt to illuminate this universal "numinous experience" through analogies to non-religious experiences such as listening to music and through personifications and other pictorial terms, which he labelled "ideograms." Any description of the numinous experience (and *a fortiori* of the numen itself) partakes *ipso facto* of a process of reification that would tend to obfuscate the reality in question if there were any other means of coming to grips with it. Otto's careful description of the phenomenon therefore represents a greater achievement than perhaps he privately believed. It has surely touched a nerve of this orthodox theologian, far removed from him in time, distance, and worldview.

The essence of the phenomenon is, as Otto proposed to call it, "creature-consciousness," "the emotion of a creature, submerged and overwhelmed by its own nothingness in contrast to that which is supreme above all creatures."<sup>11</sup> This emotion may also be termed, on the one hand, the sense of *mysterium tremendum* ("awe-ful mystery"), the components of which consist in the mysterious "wholly other," whose paradoxical transcendent presence connotes an "awefulness" (or religious dread), "overpoweringness" (or majesty), and "urgency" (or vital energy), and, on the other hand, the sense of *fascinans*, "the Dionysiac-element in the numen" that encourages a "wonderfulness" and longing for personal contact or union with the numen.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. John W. Harvey (N.Y.: Oxford U. Press, 1950), p. 7. The original German edition was entitled, *Das Heilige*, and appeared in 1917.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, chaps. iv and v.

Otto's discussion of mysticism, however, is less fortunate and hardly applies to Orthodoxy. The "characteristic notes of mysticism in all its forms," Otto declared too confidently, are "the idea of the annihilation of self" and the complementary idea of "the transcendent as the sole and entire reality."<sup>13</sup> This is too simplistic and not "early as universal in applicability as Otto assumed primarily on the basis of a comparative study of Hindu and medieval Western mystics. In short, he regarded "mysticism" as "the overstressing" of the supra-rational elements that essentially comprise religion as outlined above, and hence a deviation to one degree or another from the normative numinous experience that is "restrained and kept within measure."<sup>14</sup> To be sure, Otto indicated that a characteristic shared by all types of mysticism is identification "of the personal self with the transcendent Reality"—an observation that would conform to the Orthodox version. And in noting that mysticism exaggerates the way of intellectual and personal negation in pursuit of Being itself and "all that is," Otto added happily that "mysticism at the same time retains the *positive quality* of the wholly other as a very living factor in its over-brimming religious emotion."<sup>15</sup>

The Orthodox Tradition is essentially, and not merely tangentially, "mystical." Vladimir Lossky has noted the lack of any sharp distinctions in Eastern Christianity between mysticism and theology, or "between personal experience of the divine mysteries and the dogma affirmed by the Church." For each is impossible without the other, and theology expresses in a general, formalized way and for the common good of the faithful, "the personal working out of the content of the common faith" that mysticism usually connotes. Thus, Lossky summarizes this interrelation: "We must live the dogma expressing a revealed truth, which appears to us as an unfathomable mystery, in such a fashion that instead of assimilating the mystery to our mode of understanding, we should, on the contrary, look for a profound change, an inner transformation of spirit, enabling us to experience it mystically."<sup>16</sup> Obviously Otto's views on mysticism as deviant religious behavior hardly conform to this integral mystical theology.

Otto's positive description of the mystical characteristics of identification, however, squares rather well with the Orthodox doctrine of *theosis* ("deification") as the ultimate end of all Christian activity. This is perhaps the most central concept in Orthodox dogmatic theology. St. Irenaios of Lyons in the second century originally introduced the theme of deification implicitly when he

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 37.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>16</sup> Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (London: James Clarke & Co., Ltd., 1957), p. 8.

attempted to apply the probable reference to the angelic hosts of *Psalm* 82:6 to the human creation: “We have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, then at length gods.”<sup>17</sup> But the first codification of *theosis* appeared in the classic work by St. Athanasios, *The Incarnation of the Word*. Referring to Christ, this fourth century Patriarch of Alexandria declared: “For He was made man that we might be made God” (*theopoiethomen*).<sup>18</sup> In a subsequent apologetic work St. Athanasios amplified this epigrammatic truth in terms of the emerging two-natures christology.

For therefore did He assume the body originate and human, that having renewed it as Framer, He might deify (*theopoiese*) it in Himself, and thus might introduce us all into the kingdom after His likeness . . . For therefore the union was of this kind, that He might unite what is man by nature to Him who is in the nature of the Godhead, and his salvation and deification might be sure.<sup>19</sup>

The Orthodox liturgical tradition frequently exults in the deifying work of Christ, conveying the patristic theological formulations to the people at large in the form of popular hymns sung on various feast days according to the liturgical calendar. In these hymns the teaching is clear that, owing to the Incarnation of the Son of God, men and women may become increasingly *like* God without, of course, exceeding their own human nature and becoming God *per se*, whose divine nature is unique and unattainable, for God is numinous or “wholly other,” as Otto would have it.<sup>20</sup>

Orthodox understanding of mystical union with God differs sharply from other mystical traditions, whether Christian or non-Christian, to including of course, Otto’s own irenic Lutheran

<sup>17</sup> St. Irenaios, *Adv. Maer.* IV.38.4. ET: *ANF*, p. 522. More illustrative of the process of becoming gods (*dii*, in the extant Latin text) is the following comment in *ibid.*, V.9.2 (p. 535): “an many as fear God and trust in His Son’s advent . . . possess the Spirit of the Father, who purifies man, and raises him up to the life of God.”

<sup>18</sup> St. Athanasios, *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* 54.3. ET: *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, IV, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (2nd series; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), p. 65. (Hereafter cited as *NPNF*).

<sup>19</sup> St. Athanasios, *Orationes* II.70. ET: “Four Discourses Against the Arians,” in *ibid.*, p. 386.

<sup>20</sup> For example, canticle three of the first canon in the matins liturgy for the Feast of the Transfiguration on August 6 (or 19 according to the Julian or “Old” Calendar still in use by most Slavic Churches, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and the monasteries of Mt. Athos): “Thou hast put Adam on entire, O Christ, and changing the nature grown dark in past times, Thou hast filled it with glory and made it godlike by the alteration of Thy form.” *Festal Menaion*, trans. Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), p. 483. (Hereafter cited as *FM*).

perspective. There are four fundamental distinctions to be discussed before establishing the points of contact between Otto and the Orthodox mystical heritage.

(1) Unlike the mystical traditions of South and East Asia, the Orthodox experience of *theosis* is grounded in an historical event, the particular nature of which also separates most varieties of Christian mysticism from the other great religious traditions of the Near East, Judaism and Islam. The Incarnation of God as Jesus is believed to be the historical bedrock upon which any genuine union with God is founded. With other Christian communions, Orthodoxy shares a profound respect and appreciation for the “scandal” of particularity that the Incarnation represents; *i.e.*, God could become fully human and grow “in wisdom and in stature” (*Luke* 2:52) until His life was cut short by an ignominious death.<sup>21</sup>

Orthodox also derive from the particularity of the name Jesus the enduring significance of the particular civilization into which He was born. That God chose to break into time, place, and culture in *that* particular time, place, and culture is considered no accident of history or arbitrary divine decision. The “Christianization of Hellenism,” as Fr. Georges Florovsky repeatedly affirmed, describes the infusion of the predominant pagan Hellenistic civilization of the Mediterranean world with the biblical revelations to Israel and the early Church.<sup>22</sup> This synthesis of Hellenistic thought-forms and philosophical categories with the transforming spirit of the biblical people of God is presumed to be at once unique in history, definitive, and paradigmatic for all times and places. Therefore, union with God for the Orthodox, as for other Christians, is attributable in the first place to divine initiative (“grace”) through the Incarnation. But mystical/theological understanding of the meaning of that historical event is deemed possible only through the prism of “Christian Hellenism.”

(2) The whole human being—body, soul (mind), and spirit—is the subject of participation in the divine, as signaled again by the Incarnation. The Orthodox mystical heritage carries the Johannine epigram, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,” (*John* 1:14) to its logical conclusion by drawing attention to the significance of the body in the process of *theosis*. On the one hand, Orthodoxy stresses ascetical practices in order for the spirit to assert control over

<sup>21</sup> Jesus is quoted in *John* 6:61: “Does this offend you?” The Greek verb, *skandalizein*, means to “offend,” or “scandalize,” or “cause to stumble.” This peculiar self-consciousness concerning the magnitude of the Christian claim about Jesus highlights the rare historicity among world religions of the source of Christian mysticism. For a useful discussion of this theme, see Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray *et al* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), pp. 444-47.

<sup>22</sup> George Florovsky, “Faith and Culture,” *Collected Works*, Vol. II: *Christianity and Culture* (Belmont, Ma.: Nordland Publishing Company, 1974), p. 25.

the body and its appetites both “natural” in a primordial sense and “unnatural” as a result of the Fall from grace in the mythical, pre-historical, paradisical state. On the other hand, the body, or material reality, is viewed, as a result of the Incarnation, with a reverence that is unique among Christian communions and even distinctive among those world religions such as Judaism which maintain an abiding appreciation for life in this very material world. The Orthodox mystical experience of God as the Uncreated Light, as told, for example, by St. Symeon the New Theologian in the tenth century, is quite palpable and curiously perceivable initially by corporeal eyes, as the three apostles experienced when the Lord was transfigured on Mount Tabor (*Mark* 9:2-8). And yet this seemingly immanent Light, which so fills mind and spirit and senses, to transfigures the body as it did that of Christ on Mount Tabor, is utterly transcendent and immaterial.<sup>23</sup>

More familiar perhaps is the Orthodox use of icons, not only as decorative in churches and homes, but as means of mystical communion with the persons depicted—with the Person of the Son of God made flesh as Jesus, as well as with the many saints who reflect in their particularly spiritual lives the one true holiness that was revealed through Jesus Christ. Icons serve in the mystical experience as the focus of personal prayer, contemplation, and physical devotions such as reverent kissing and prostrations. The role of icons in Orthodox Tradition is essential and based on the dogma of the Incarnation promulgated at the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787 A.D., in which legates from the Pope of Rome participated on behalf of the Western Church and which asserted in no uncertain terms: “Anathema to those who do not salute the holy and venerable images.”<sup>24</sup>

(3) Unfortunately, Otto’s description of the normative numinous experience lends it a generally static, a historical quality that was unintended by one so firmly rooted in the Lutheran tradition. In contrast, the Orthodox experience of the mystical participation of the

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Catechetical Discourses* XVI. 3:

“I fell prostrate on the ground, and at once I saw, and behold, a great light was immaterially shining on me and seized hold of my whole mind and soul. . . . It so invigorated and strengthend my limbs and muscles, which had been faint through great weariness, that it seemed to me as though I was stripping myself of the garment of corruption.”

ET: Symeon the New Theologian, *The Discourses*, trans. C.J. de Catanzaro (N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1980), pp. 200f. See also the excellent analysis of the literal and metaphorical aspects of the Uncreated Light in Vladimir Lossky, “The Theology of Light in the Thought of St. Gregory Palamas,” *In the Image and Likeness of God*, esp. pp. 58-64.

<sup>24</sup> “The Decree of the Holy, Great, Ecumenical Synod, The Synod of Nice(a),” in *NPNF*, XIV, 551.

human person in the life of God is neither a static contemplation of the “essence” of God nor a gradual merging of the many into the One, but rather an eternal dynamic progress that approximates the divine in a manner analogous perhaps to the mathematical concept of limit in calculus and analytical geometry. This notion of *epektasis* (literally, “tension”), or continual, inexhaustible progress toward perfection, is virtually synonymous with *theosis* and lends the latter a peculiarly optimistic quality. Since there is no fixed spiritual goal or destination the attainment of which represents a state of satisfaction, each person is motivated to persist in quest of an ever-improving, ever-deepening, and ever-fulfilling relationship to the Holy Trinity. St. Gregory of Nyssa was one of the first Church Fathers to stress the point. In his *Encomium to Moses* he concluded that since divine nature is “unlimited and infinite,” the Christian “participant’s desire itself necessarily has no stopping place but stretches out with the limitless.”<sup>25</sup> Earlier in his life, however, St. Gregory waxed eloquent on this score in his *Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles*.

Though the new grace we may obtain is greater than what we had before, it does not put a limit on our final goal; rather, for those who are rising in perfection, the limit of the good that is attained becomes the beginning of the discovery of higher goods. Thus they never stop rising, moving from one new beginning to the next, and the beginning of ever greater graces is never limited of itself. For the desire of those who thus rise never rests in what they can already understand; but by an ever greater and greater desire, the soul keeps rising constantly to another which lies ahead, and thus make its way through ever higher regions towards the Transcendent.<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, the eternal nature of this spiritual quest mitigates the tendency toward comparisons or, worse, competitiveness with one’s fellow Christians. It is especially liberating to realize that one can proceed toward deification at one’s own pace, as it were.

(4) The human person retains his or her nature and selfhood as creature in relation to the Creator, whose “essence” remains unfathomable, while God communes with the human person through

<sup>25</sup> St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Vita Moysis* I.7. ET: Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, trans. Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson (N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1978), p. 31. See also the excellent analysis in Patrick F. O’Connell, “The Double Journey in Saint Gregory of Nyssa: *The Life of Moses*,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, XXVIII, No. 4 (Winter, 1983), 318f.

<sup>26</sup> St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Hom. VIII*. ET: *From Glory to Glory: Texts from Gregory of Nyssa’s Mystical Writings*, trans. and ed. Herbert Musurillo, S.J. (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1979), pp. 212f.

divine *energeiai* (“energies”)—a theological category unique to the Greek Fathers and to Orthodoxy. The divine and human natures are considered absolutely distinct (though united paradoxically without mixture or separation in the Persons of the Incarnate Son of God), and so the eternal integrity of the creature is guaranteed by God. From this standpoint there is no “annihilation of self,” as Otto avers, nor mystical panentheism. But if God does indeed enable men and women to become “partakers of the divine nature” (*2 Peter* 1:4), how is the paradox resolved? The Orthodox corpus of liturgical hymns provides a partial answer. One hymn for the Feast of the Transfiguration refers to “the rays of Thy divinity,” thereby implying a distinction between source and extension of the divine in Christ.<sup>27</sup> Another hymn for the same feast suggests, “... Christ, shining on Mount Tabor, dimly disclosed to His disciples the image and reflection of the divine brightness.”<sup>28</sup> A more systematic explanation, however, naturally can be found in the theological treatises of the Church Fathers. A detailed explication of the concept of *energeiai* and its development, in particular, by St. Basil the Great, St. Maximos the Confessor, and St. Gregory Palamas is beyond the scope of the essay.<sup>29</sup> Suffice it to state, as Fr. John Meyendorff does so succinctly, that the “possibility of experiencing God through means other than intellectual knowledge, emotion, or the senses” alone requires the introduction of a third Trinitarian (or Triadological, properly speaking) category besides *ousia* (“essence”) and *hypostasis* (“person”)—specifically, “an opening of God, His existence outside of His own nature, His actions or “energies” through which He voluntarily reveals Himself to man.”<sup>30</sup> The divine *energeiai* constitute the dynamic, relational aspect of God the Holy Trinity, actively communicating the divine, while preserving, however, the absolute transcendence of the divine essence, or the numen, to use Otto’s term, which is “wholly other.” Thus, from the human perspective, one may know the will of God—another example of a

<sup>27</sup> Canticle four of the second canon for the matins liturgy (*FM*, p. 486).

<sup>28</sup> Canticle one of the first canon for the matins liturgy (*FM*, p. 482).

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, St. Basil the Great, *Ep.* 234 (ad *Amphilochium*), where this fourth century Church Father uses the term *energeiai* in the distinctive manner later promulgated by the Orthodox Church in defense against Roman Catholic criticism. Greek original with ET: Saint Basil, *The Letters*, III (“The Loeb Classical Library”; Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1930), pp. 371-77. For St. Maximos, see various excerpts from his writings in *The Philokalia*, II, comp. St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain and St. Markarios of Corinth, trans. and ed. G.E.H. Palmer *et al* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), esp. pp. 123, 239f. For St. Gregory Palamas, see the collected excerpts on this subject in Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*, ed. John Meyendorff (N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1983), pp. 93-111.

<sup>30</sup> John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (N.Y.: Fordham U. Press, 1974), p. 13. Cf. pp. 185-88 for an excellent but brief discussion of the development of this concept from Aristotle to St. Gregory Palamas.

divine “energy”—and one may become more like God by fulfilling that divine will not only in terms of external behavior but also by opening one’s spirit to a deeper interior acceptance of the value of that will for one’s life. But in no way does such participation in that will-energy of God capture the totality of God’s infinite presence. Conversely, God’s *energai* communicate “dimly,” to quote the hymn above, the divine presence to humans without confronting them with the awesome consequences that a full theophany of the transcendent divine nature would entail—in Old Testament language, utter consumption and annihilation!<sup>31</sup>

Notwithstanding the fundamental distinctiveness of the Orthodox understanding of mystical union with God, the basic components of the normative numinous experience as described by Otto reflect many of the classic features of *theosis*. Particularly relevant are the aspects of humility, awe, and longing for union that are entailed in “creature-consciousness.” In addition, the inclusion of “states of calm (novxia) as well as of transport” as part of the element of *fascinans* in the numinous experience<sup>32</sup> allows adequately for the “hesychast” tradition of Orthodox spirituality. This eremitic practice of continuous prayer and strict asceticism in solitude dates back to the fourth century desert monks of Egypt. Despite the similarity of the advanced prayer/breathing technique to some Hindu Yoga practices, the hesychast form of mysticism was affirmed officially by three Orthodox Church councils in fourteenth century Constantinople, largely at the behest of St. Gregory Palamas, the brilliant and spiritual, albeit controversial, Archbishop of Thessalonika, and has since become part of the mainstream of Orthodox monastic spirituality.<sup>33</sup> The Greek root in the word “hesychast” is *hesychia* (“stillness”)—the very word Otto himself chose to describe an element of *fascinans*—designates the manner of life sought by those who would practice this demanding form of contemplative prayer. “Holy stillness of body and soul” constitutes step twenty-seven, for example, in the thirty-step *Ladder of Divine Ascent* by St. John Climakos, a sixth century hesychast who struggled for forty years as a hermit on Mount Sinai before assuming the position of *igumen* (abbot) of St. Catherine’s Monastery in Sinai. He described a hesychast as one “who strives to confine his incorporeal being within

<sup>31</sup> If references in the Old Testament to God’s “face,” which is so awesome as to cause death (Exodus 33:20) “like a devouring fire” (Exodus 24:17, RSV), constitute an Hebraic equivalent to the divine “essence,” then the phrase “the glory of the Lord” (*shekinah*), which veils the divine being as a protective light that humans may see (Exodus 16:6), is an antitype of the divine “energies.”

<sup>32</sup> Otto, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>33</sup> For example, St. Gregory Palamas defended the hesychast method of prayer explicitly in *The Triads* I.ii.6-7 (*supra* n29).

his bodily house, paradoxical as this is.”<sup>34</sup> If that characterization is typically vague, St. John painted a slightly sharper picture of *hesychia* as a mystical practice:

Stillness of the body is the knowledge and composure of the habits and feelings. And stillness of soul is the knowledge of one’s thoughts and an inviolable mind . . .

The beginning of stillness is to throw off all noise as disturbing for the depth (of the soul). And the end of it is not to fear disturbances but to remain insensible to them. He, who in actually going out does not go out, is gentle and wholly a house of love . . .<sup>35</sup>

The inclusion of love, and other virtues as well, as an intermediate goal of the hesychast prevents this form of mysticism from degenerating into an excessively self-centered escape from the material world. Of course, the supreme goal is practical knowledge, or experience, of the transcendent God through a personal purity perfected by the “indwelling word,” or the immanent spiritual presence of Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, within the spirit of the hesychast.<sup>36</sup> Thus, the need for stillness that the hesychast perceived is determined in part by the paradoxical combination of awesomeness and attractiveness in God that Otto formulated so well.

But that quality of Otto’s philosophical psychology of religious experience which most closely parallels orthodox mystical/theological tradition in his metaphysical pre-supposition and the attendant *via negationis*<sup>37</sup> by which he attempts to strip away all rational conceptions or unnecessary, misleading reifications of the numen and the numinous experience. All Orthodox theology is fundamentally *apophatic* in method—the so-called “negative” approach that rejects all conceptualizations of the divine as ultimately inadequate (in this same spirit Otto called them “ideograms”) in favor of a personal preparation of self-emptying and mental withdrawal from all things for the more immediate, experimental knowledge of the essentially transcendent God when and how God chooses to reveal Himself. The classic early statement of this negative method in patristic mystical theology was the brief sixth century treatise, *Mystical Theology* by

<sup>34</sup> Step 27.6. ET: St. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* (Rev. ed.; Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1978), p. 198.

<sup>35</sup> Step 27.2,5. *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Step 30.22. *Ibid.*, p. 227. Both trichotomist (body/soul/spirit) and dichotomist (body/soul) schemas of human nature were popular among the Church Fathers. In the latter the qualities of mind, the animating principle, and the capability of divine likeness are subsumed under “soul.”

<sup>37</sup> Otto, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

Pseudo-Dionysios. The introductory paragraph exhorted the author's disciple in this way.

. . . and thee, dear Timothy, I counsel that, in the earnest exercise of mystic contemplation, thou leave the senses and the activities of the intellect and all things that the senses or the intellect can perceive, and all things in this world of nothingness, or in the world of being, and that, thine understanding being laid to rest thou strain (as far as thou mayest) towards a union with Him who neither being nor understanding can contain. For, by the unceasing and absolute renunciation of thyself and all things, thou shalt in pureness cast all things aside, and be released from all, and so shalt be led upwards to the Ray of that divine Darkness which exceedeth all existence.<sup>38</sup>

The same principle is also conveyed in the more concise modern language of a contemporary Byzantine Catholic theologian: "Man can only wait in the desert of his nothingness, hoping to receive God as He wishes to make Himself known."<sup>39</sup> However one attempts to describe this absolute humility of mind and spirit, apophatic spirituality in the Orthodox sense, like Otto's apophatic method of ascertaining the effects of the numinous experience without pretending to disclose the nature of the "wholly other," is not purely negative, for the end result is a positive experience of something objectively real—namely, God or the numen. In the case of Orthodoxy, as indicated above, God is believed to reveal Himself through the uncreated divine *energai*, or providential actions relative to the created order, which human beings are able to experience directly, thereby achieving an ever-deepening union with God.

Where Otto's theory of religious experience inherently fails to account for the Orthodox mystical heritage is his implicit individualism. The numinous experience seems to be an exclusively "I-Thou" relation between the human subject and the numinous object. Aside from a few references to liturgical worship, there is no mention of the possible communal context for the numinous experience that mark various religious traditions both "primitive" and more highly

<sup>38</sup> Pseudo-Dionysios, *Mystica Theologia* I. ET: Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology*, trans. C. E. Rolt (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1948), pp. 191f. The symbol of divine "darkness" takes its cue from Exodus 20:21 and is developed by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, *et al.* Advanced knowledge of the Infinite and Absolute is even beyond all light! The same theme is revealed in St. Paul's use of the opposite metaphor in 1 Timothy 6:16: "Lord of lords, who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see" (RSV).

<sup>39</sup> George A. Maloney, S. J., *The Breath of the Mystic* (Denville, N.J.: Dimension Books, 1974), p. 25

developed. This shortcoming is particularly acute in light of the Orthodox practice of *sobornost*. This profound Russian concept was first used by Alexi Khomiakov in the mid-nineteenth century to convey a sense of *katholon* in the Greek original of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381 A.D.) as the unanimous unity of all the faithful despite their otherwise pluralistic characteristics, or, in other words, the *depth* (and *not* geographical extent) of true communion with divine Truth within the religious community conceived as a single though variegated living organism.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, so powerful is this sense of community that Lossky goes so far as to declare, “Mystical individualism has remained alien to the spirituality of the Eastern Church.”<sup>41</sup>

For his description of the numinous experience to achieve maximum utility for an Orthodox theologian, Otto’s perspective on mysticism would have to be reformulated so as to afford mysticism a more central role in religion, and the dynamic and communal dimensions of the numinous experience would require attention or the complement of another theoretical approach to religion. A step in the latter direction is forthcoming in the next section of this article.

## The Phenomenological Dualism of Mircea Eliade

Mircea Eliade, who was perhaps the most prolific historian of religions in the world, was surely more of a phenomenologist of religion than Rudolf Otto, but some striking points of comparison still obtain. Although he never posited his metaphysical views as clearly and assertively as Otto, Eliade, the Romanian-born professor at the University of Chicago, used his basic category—“the sacred”—in a way that suggests to his readers that this broadly-conceived and wide spread, even universal, phenomenon always points beyond itself to a sort of meta-reality. Religious symbols always point to something real, Eliade argued frequently, because in the symbolic world of the *homo religious* (“religious man,” particularly in so-called primitive cultures) the real is equivalent to the sacred, regardless of whether or not that “real” is tangible or empirically evident to an outside observer. Eliade thus seemed to employ a metaphysical agnosticism in his writings, but the logical structure of the sacred as he elucidated it leaves room for someone with more metaphysical certitude to objectify the “real” as the “numen” or God.”

Similarly, in the major work to be considered here, *The Sacred and the Profane*, Eliade employed a “negative” methodology that

<sup>40</sup> “Lettre au rédacteur de l’Union Chrétienne à l’occasion d’un discours du Père Gagarine, Jésuite,” in A.-S. Khomiakoff, *L’Église Latine et la Protestantisme au point de vue de l’Église d’Orient* (Lausanne & Vevey: B. Benda, Librairie-Éditeur, 1872), pp. 391-400, esp. p. 398: “selon l’unité de tous.”

<sup>41</sup> Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, p. 21.

may be likened to the apophatic ways of orthodoxy and Otto.<sup>42</sup> In his analysis of the fundamental dichotomy that characterizes the consciousness of the religious person—sacred versus profane—Eliade necessarily posited the sacred reality “experienced” by the religious person, for that, after all, is the essential phenomenon that Eliade the phenomenologist must study and explain. But his presentation of his explanation reversed these priorities in order to conform to the dictates of logic: the profane or non-sacred world is that which is immediately evident to the mind and senses, and so it must be shown by means of negation to be comparatively insignificant, illusory, or false in order to arrive at the true value of the sacred as conceived or perceived by the religious person. To be sure, Eliade showed less concern for the nature of that sacred reality than for the attitudes and the behavior of the people who believe in it. And yet Eliade’s phenomenological method was by no means comprehensive. In the process of procuring examples for his major phenomenological types of the sacred in terms of space, time, nature, and the human life-cycle, Eliade appears to have wrenched the items from their own historico-cultural contexts. While paying due homage to the morphological component of a phenomenology of religion in *The Sacred and the Profane*, he virtually scorned the diachronic dimension of the various phenomena, which cannot be totally isolated or unrooted without a corresponding loss of understanding of the particular phenomena. In fairness it must be said that Eliade virtually admits as much when he declares as his “primary concern” the need “to present the specific dimensions of religious experience,” which experience, he nevertheless concludes on the basis of ethnographical research and historical study, is universal in its salient features.<sup>43</sup>

In balance, however, Eliade’s interest in the specific manifestations of the sacred in the ordinary daily lives of religious persons in community provides a counterweight to Otto’s sharp focus on the psychological-spiritual effects of the extraordinary numinous experience on individual men and women of faith. This counterweight should prove useful to a fuller understanding of the *liturgical* dimension of the Orthodox mystical heritage, as epitomized in the “holy mystery” (sacrament) of the Eucharist, which in the eloquent phrases of Nicholas Arseniev, “has a central, living, mystic meaning, but for the whole community.” For in the Eucharist, where “the divine mingles with the human, the terrestrial, . . . praise and

<sup>42</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (N.Y.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959), p. 10. The original French edition appeared in 1957.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17. Also in volume two of his *magnum opus*, Eliade applied his phenomenology/*religionsgeschichtliche* method to the early historical development of the Christian Church. See *A History of Religious Ideas*, Vol. II—*From Gautama Buddha to the Triumph of Christianity* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1982), esp. pp. 332-409.

sacrifice are offered to the Lord for the world and by the world.”<sup>44</sup> Nowhere is this more evident in the Divine Liturgies of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great than when the priest, having recalled the Words of Institution by Christ at the Last Supper, elevates the *diskos* (paten) and chalice containing the bread and wine in the process of being changed into the mystical Body and Blood of Christ, and exclaims: “Thine own of thine own we offer unto Thee in behalf of all and for all.”<sup>45</sup>

Since Orthodox liturgy in the cultic sense, like most religious liturgical experience, entails a panoply of concrete phenomena such as special places, times, instruments, materials, and officials, Eliade’s analysis of the spatial, temporal, and natural aspects of the “centeredness” of the religious person in the sacred or supernatural realm and the interrelations of these myths, symbols, and rituals would seem made to order for an Orthodox theologian. Particularly striking is the parallel between the Orthodox and Eliadean perspectives on the procedures by which the religious person sets apart certain places, times, etc., from the seemingly profane (or “fallen”) world in order to re-sacralize the world first by finding or rerooting oneself in what he or she intuitively knows is the true ultimate reality and, second, by re-interpreting, re-imaging, and re-constituting the world around him or her from this restored vantage point. In Orthodox terms, the religious man or woman is motivated to convert the world in accordance with the eschatological vision of wholeness revealed by Christ, wherein He is “all and in all” (*Colossians 3:11*). The cosmic dimension of this vision is manifested in particular in the special Orthodox liturgical service of the Blessing of the Waters on the Feast of the Theophany (or Epiphany) of Our Lord on January 6, or 19 according to the Julian or “Old” calendar. The priest prays before a baptismal or special font filled with ordinary water and invokes the blessing of God that the waters “may be sanctified by the might and operation and descent of the Holy Spirit” and “may be given the grace of redemption and the blessing of the Jordan.”<sup>46</sup> The initial revelation of the Holy Trinity on the occasion of Jesus’ Baptism in the Jordan River by St. John the Forerunner is believed to have begun the restoration and transfiguration of the natural order of creation that was climaxed, of course, at the Resurrection, when the powers of Satan, sin, and death were vanquished for all time. The mystical transformation of nature that commences at the Theophany, however, is symbolized by the prayers and ritual actions pertaining to water—one of the four essential elements according to

<sup>44</sup> Nicholas Arseniev, *Mysticism and the Eastern Church*, trans. Arthur Chambers (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1979), p. 58.

<sup>45</sup> The Koine Greek original is: “*Ta sa ek tōn sōn, soi prospheromen, kata panta kai dia panta.*”

<sup>46</sup> FM, p. 351.

the ancient Greeks. The first part of the prayer of blessing found in the Greek Orthodox liturgical books contains the following exultation.

Today the waters of the Jordan are transformed into healing by the coming of the Lord. Today the whole creation is watered by mystical streams. Today the transgressions of men are washed away by the streams of the Jordan . . . Today the bitter water, as once with Moses and the people of Israel, is changed into sweetness by the coming of the Lord.<sup>47</sup>

So striking, in fact, are the parallels between Orthodox liturgical (and theological) mysticism and Eliade's depiction of the "archaic" religious person that one may wonder whether Eliade has truly captured in words the structures of archaic and developed religion or has allowed his own Romanian Orthodox upbringing to inform his perceptions to an extent far greater than he would have admitted. Several examples should lay the foundation for consideration of this surprising possibility.

First, Eliade's insightful analysis of the sacredness of nature and cosmic religion included a highly informed "paradigmatic history of baptism" with surprisingly numerous quotations from various Church Fathers. These remarks together point to a cosmic redemption symbolized in the liturgical use of water that I discussed above. Eliade linked "these new valorizations of baptismal symbolism" to what he contended to be "the universally disseminated aquatic symbolism" in pre-Christian religions—most notably water as the lair of mythical monsters of the abyss, and water as means of spiritual purification and rebirth. On the one hand, Eliade argued that these values are not mutually exclusive and even cited the primary teachers in Orthodox Tradition in support of this claim. "Certain Fathers of the primitive church had seen the value of correspondence between the symbols advanced by Christianity and the symbols that are the common property of mankind."<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, this syncretistic penchant for harmonizing the insights of archaic and more advanced religions was mitigated (or may I say "redeemed"?) by a tendency that reflects an Orthodox patristic understanding of antitypes and fulfillment. For example, concerning baptism he suggested, "It could even be said that the aquatic symbol *awaited* the fulfillment of its deepest meaning through the new values contributed by Christianity."<sup>49</sup>

Second, I have already cited the emphasis on the sacred as the "norm" by which the profane derives its meaning as an inferior,

<sup>47</sup> *FM*, pp. 354f.

<sup>48</sup> Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 136.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137 (italics his). Cf. pp. 129-37.

corruptive anti-reality. But Eliade's vigorous critique of "desacralization" was structurally homologous to the Orthodox critique of "secularism." When modern non-religious man or woman, Eliade argued forcefully, "regards himself solely as the subject and agent of history, he or she "desacralizes himself and the world." The result, in Eliade's estimation, was unmistakably unfortunate: "The sacred is the prime obstacle to his freedom. He will become himself only when he is totally demysticized. He will not be truly free until he has killed the last god."<sup>50</sup> Moreover, frequent references to "crypto-religious behavior" on the part of "profane man" indicate the presumption of a natural religiousness that has been somehow thwarted.<sup>51</sup>

Third, the key concept of *hierophany* as the "act of manifestation of the sacred" is broad enough to encompass "elementary" forms of "the manifestation of the sacred in some ordinary object" as well as "the supreme hierophany (which, for a Christian, is the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ)."<sup>52</sup> In *A History of Religious Ideas*, moreover, Eliade went so far as to pronounce the Church Fathers correct in defending the dogma of the Incarnation, for it "represents the last and most perfect hierophany" due its concrete, historical quality without, however, suffering from a historicizing reductionism. He added that it could even be said that "the kenosis of Jesus Christ not only constitutes the crowning of all the hierophanies accomplished from the beginning of time but also justifies them, that is, proves their validity."<sup>53</sup>

The explicit hierarchy of types of hierophanies also displays strong logical affinities to the *epiphanic* theme in Orthodox dogmatic and liturgical theology. The *apolytikion* (theme-hymn) for the Feast of the Theopany proclaims in no uncertain terms, "When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest."<sup>54</sup> But every time the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil is celebrated, the priest-celebrant invokes the Holy Spirit upon the assembly and upon the bread and wine antitypes to "bless them and hallow them, and *show* this bread to be itself the precious Body of our Lord, and God, and Savior, Jesus Christ" and likewise with the cup as of the Blood of Christ.<sup>55</sup> This particular form of the eucharistic *epiklesis*, which is older than the corresponding shortened version in the more frequent Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, clearly demonstrates the epiphanic quality of the regular liturgical event in the lives of Orthodox Christians.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203. Incidentally, this is the only reference, oblique or otherwise, to mysticism *per se*.

<sup>51</sup> For example, *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>53</sup> Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas*, II, 408.

<sup>54</sup> *FM*, p. 359.

<sup>55</sup> Italics added. The Koine Greek original for "show" in the infinitive is *anadeixai*.

Fourth, Eliade's discussion of cosmogony, particularly the themes of the cosmos as sacred organism and the "earthly reproduction of a transcendent model," employed concrete examples drawn from ancient Judaism and North American Indian religions among others, but he offered as the crowning example the dome-surmounted square of Byzantine church architecture. As "copy of the cosmos," he averred, "the Byzantine Church incarnates and at the same time sanctifies the world."<sup>56</sup>

Fifth, Eliade's emphasis on the religious person's thirst for being and life as opposed to non-being and death—above all, his or her desire "to transfigure his existence, to make it like its divine model"—partook, to be sure, of a wide variety of religious traditions. But in Orthodoxy this emphasis on ontological wholeness and opposition to death is absolutely fundamental and tends to distance orthodox theology from its Western Christian counterparts with the stress on the more juridical aspects of sin, guilt, and righteousness. The quintessential expression of this Orthodox concern is the *troparion* hymn for Pascha (Easter), which resounds repeatedly among clergy and laity during the Paschal season: "Christ has risen from the dead, by death trampling upon Death, and has bestowed life to those in the tombs."<sup>57</sup>

To be sure, Eliade's use of familiar Orthodox concepts and his occasional explicit deference to Christianity, though unusual for a phenomenologist of religion, have a reciprocal demand. If Christianity represents a pinnacle of sorts, all that went before must be acknowledged by the religionist and Orthodox theologian alike as having some value, even validity: "It is to recognize that the countless pre-Christian generations were not victims of an illusion when they proclaimed the presence of the sacred, that is, of the divine, in the objects and rhythms of the cosmos."<sup>58</sup> Again this emphasis on continuity rather than discontinuity between archaic and more advanced religions fits rather well into the self-understanding of Orthodoxy as the "end" of religions and the fullness of revelation. Irrespective of his Romanian Orthodox roots, Eliade probably would have hesitated to affirm the neatness of this fit, but the way he elucidated the sacred versus profane dichotomy is nevertheless conducive to the craft of Orthodox theologians.

One orthodox liturgical theologian whose work was obviously informed by Eliade's phenomenological dualism is the late Fr. Alexander Schmemann. In his most influential work, *For the Life of the World*, Schmemann recognized the popularity of dichotomies in the modern world: spiritual versus material, supernatural versus

<sup>56</sup> Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 58 and esp. pp. 61f.

<sup>57</sup> *Megale Ebdomas Pascha*, comp. Fr. George L. Papadeas (Daytona Beach: n.p., 1977), pp. 450f.

<sup>58</sup> Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas*, II. 408f.

natural, and sacred versus profane. But these he considered destructive of the primordial harmony in the divinely-created cosmos that Orthodoxy seeks to restore, albeit in an improved version in the aftermath of the Incarnation. In language redolent of Eliade's portrayal of archaic *homo religious*, Schmemann offered an Orthodox description of *homo adorans*, whose worship of God ideally is no mere isolated cultic act but rather a way of life:

The first basic definition of man is that he is *the priest*. He stands in the center of the world and unifies it in his act of blessing God, of both receiving the world from God and offering it to God. By filling the world with this Eucharist, he transforms his life, the one that he receives from the world, into life in God, into communion with Him. The world was created as the "matter," the material of one all-embracing eucharist, and man was created as the priest of this cosmic sacrament.<sup>59</sup>

This passage more than any other in the book represents a synthesis of Eliade's insights and Orthodox liturgical mysticism.

Similar instances abound. For example, Schmemann discussed the orthodox sacralization of time by distinguishing "*natural* time," which "was fulfilled in the mystery of time as *history*" (for example to the Exodus), which in turn "was transformed into the mystery of eschatological time" (that is, "movement toward fulfillment of the Kingdom" inaugurated by Christ). Pascha, the "Feast of Feasts," does not so much commemorate an historical event as signify "the fulfillment of time itself."<sup>60</sup> Eliade himself noted that "Christianity radically changed the experience and the concept of liturgical time" insofar as it "affirms the historicity of the person in Christ." This *historical time* differs somewhat from the *mystical time* "periodically reactualized in pre-Christian religions."<sup>61</sup> But the continuity in Eliade's view—and one suspects in Schmemann's, too—is more pronounced than the radical nature of the change from pre-Christian (and pre-Israelite as well) to Christian perspectives on the fundamental sacredness of reality.

I could multiply the examples of Eliade's influence on Schmemann, particularly the latter's virtual validation of the phenomenologist's detection of the natural aquatic symbolism underlying Christian baptismal practice.<sup>62</sup> Suffice it to say that Schmemann's liturgical theology, so imbued as it was with the spirit

<sup>59</sup> Alexander Schmemann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973), p. 15.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 56f.

<sup>61</sup> Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 72.

<sup>62</sup> *Supra* n49.

and method of Eliade's phenomenological dualism as both a heuristic device and a means of supporting the classic Orthodox perspective on "religion," has already proved the usefulness of Eliade's theory of religion to Orthodox theologians. One need only allow for the primary historical instead of mythical basis of Orthodox liturgical mysticism before adopting Eliade's approach to religion in its entirety.

## The Sociological Dichotomies of Max Weber

In contrast to the extensive claims of Otto's and Eliade's theories of religion, the contribution of Max Weber to an understanding of human religiousness was at once less comprehensive and more intensive in terms of his concerns and the applicability of his approach to the many dimensions of religion.

In his greatest work on religion, the unfinished (and perhaps unpolished) *Sociology of Religion*, the great German sociologist unmistakably announced the parameters of his study on the first page. "The essence of religion is not even our concern," he wrote, "as we make it our task to study the conditions and effects of a particular type of social behavior."<sup>63</sup> Without denying the possibility of an objective numinous or sacred reality and its attendant effects on religious person, Weber simply ignored or bracketed it in favor of pursuing a more circumscribed sociological interest in the relations that obtain between religious ideas and commitments and other aspects of human social conduct, particularly the economic. Economic activities, he asserted, perhaps prematurely or too much in a Marxian mold, were the predominant ends of religious and magical actions anyway. He decided, therefore, to focus on religious faith as a casual agent in the dynamic of social change, especially the roles of religious leaders (above all, the charismatic "prophet" types) in effective "break-throughs" from one state of social organization to another. Weber's evolutionary perspective encouraged him to express personal preferences among the socio-religious phenomena and value judgments as to their place in the presumed dialectic of progress that characterizes social development. Other assumptions, implicit or sometimes explicitly owned, range from the freedom to categorize entire religious traditions according to "ideal types" to the arbitrary value attributed to religion as chiefly an expression of ethics of one sort or another, which permits Weber to denigrate the "sacramental" aspects of religion in typically early-twentieth century German liberal Protestant fashion as "magic," "regressive," or otherwise counter-productive in terms of social change.

<sup>63</sup> Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), p. 1. This text was first published in 1922 under the title, "Religions-soziologie," as part of a multi-part work entitled, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*.

But the same evolutionary hypothesis that undergirded his personal attitude toward religion as a non-believer also led Weber to employ a Hegelian dialectic in the form of heuristic dichotomies that, taken as a whole, represent trajectories through history in conformity to basic ideal types of social organization without broad cultural spheres. Religions of “radical salvation” provide solutions to the fundamental religious problem of theodicy by responding to the presumed basic human drive for meaning and the need to resolve ethical discrepancies. The direction of these solutions, in Weber’s estimation, is essentially twofold: either (1) “immanent,” which trajectory features one side of a series of dichotomies including “exemplary prophecy,” “mysticism,” and *Gemeinschaft* (organic community), or (2) “transcendental,” which trajectory includes the other half of these dichotomies, specifically “ethical prophecy,” “asceticism,” and *Gesellschaft* (voluntary association in society). Provided that one does not take these broadly-conceived ideal types too literally or reduce all religious phenomena in their social context to either trajectory,<sup>64</sup> an Orthodox theologian, or any contemporary scholar of religion, might use Weber’s dichotomies to illuminate certain aspects of the reciprocal causal relations between the orthodox mystical heritage and the various social contexts in which it has been situated since the apostolic era. In the present article, I shall resort to two of Weber’s classic dichotomies that seem most promising with respect to the *ascetical/ethical* dimension of Orthodox mysticism.

The first dichotomy appears in the chapter on the charismatic “prophet” figure.<sup>65</sup> The two basic ideal types of “prophecy” may be summarized according to the following chart, while noting, however, that Weber’s own presentation of the dichotomy is not so neatly arranged.

	<i>Exemplary prophecy</i>	vs.	<i>Ethical prophecy</i>
basic role description of prophet figure	demonstrative model via personal virtue		preacher of “obedience” to “a concrete command or an abstract norm” as “an ethical duty”
conceptions of legitimization	self-image as “vessel” (personal relation of identification with divine out of “self-interest”)		self-image as “commissioned” “instrument” of divine will (mission to promulgate an order)

<sup>64</sup> In an unpublished but highly perceptive essay written in 1971, Gert Mueller also observes that such dichotomies, when used uncritically, have distorted the picture of Eastern and archaic religions by presenting them simplistically as “monolithic wholes.” He suggests a useful modification of the Weberian approach whereby it would be a “heuristic principle to look for the recessive, or ‘latent’ subcurrents along with their dominant, or ‘manifest’ main currents.” See Gert Mueller, “Asceticism and Mysticism: A Contribution Towards the Sociology of Faith” (unpublished typescript in Barbour Library of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary), p. 28.

<sup>65</sup> Weber, op. cit., pp. 55–59.

	<i>Exemplary prophecy</i>	vs.	<i>Ethical prophecy</i>
underlying cognitive conceptions of nature of divinity	immanent, pantheistic principle of divinity as “superdivine, impersonal forces” in which prophet <i>et al</i> participate		transcendental conception of personal, ethical divinity (one or more gods) outside and above world, for which it/they legislate
polar examples	religious philosophy of India; Lao Tzu; Buddhism		(confined to Near East) Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and religion of Zoroaster
cultural origins	value attached to regularity of meteorological processes		absolute control of artificial irrigation by monarch
likely expression in religious community through “routinization”	“elitist” movements of those with superior religious status		firmly organized congregation, or “church” ideal type, including various categories of persons

Without accepting the logical structures of the respective “opposites” as presented in the vertical columns, particularly the assignment of “Christianity” to the right-hand column, an orthodox theologian nevertheless can find useful terminology for the purpose of explaining the qualities of the Orthodox mystical-moral heritage which otherwise seem to defy categorization. Specifically, the Orthodox moral exemplar partakes of both forms of “prophecy,” drawing more perhaps from the exemplary version, notwithstanding Weber’s interpretation of Christianity. For Orthodoxy, at the popular, if not academic, level features a collection of saints and resultant hagiographic legacy that seeks to instill moral virtues more by personal example than by discursive reasoning. Integral to this hagiographic style of moral development is the emphasis on spirituality that was properly termed “mystical” in the section of the present essay on Otto’s theory of religious experience. If Orthodox moral inculcation is a blend (or, optimistically speaking, a resolution) of Weber’s “ethical” and “exemplary” forms, then a series of corrections of the logical structures within the dichotomy also would be in order. For example, the conception of legitimization would include both self-images. The Orthodox mystic is a “vessel” of the personal love of God, but this ever-deepening consciousness that God accepts him or her and is manifestly willing to suffer for him or her even unto death of a cross motivates the mystic to love others as as he or she ought as an “instrument” of that same divine love.<sup>66</sup> St. Paul inaugurated the

<sup>66</sup> For this connection between mysticism and other-directed love, see Maloney, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

first part of this theme when he reminded the wayward Church in Corinth that the body of each Christian is “a temple of the Holy Spirit within you,” and that each follower of Christ was “bought with a price”—namely, the Cross (1 *Corinthians* 6:19, 20). The complementary aspect of this theme—imitation of Christ’s love for His creation has its roots in Jesus’ “farewell discourse” to His disciples (for example, *John* 14:12 and 15:12f) and blossoms in the subsequent centuries of Orthodox spiritual literature. Unequalled for its concise quality is St. Maximos the Confessor’s statement: “He who loves Christ is bound to imitate Him to the best of his ability.”<sup>67</sup> Similarly, the underlying cognitive conception would be both “immanent” (though certainly not pantheistic) and “transcendent” in keeping with the paradox of the Incarnation of God as Jesus. Moreover, the forms of social organization in Orthodoxy would reasonably include both “elitist” and “church” ideal types, as in fact the Orthodox Tradition has demonstrated: monastic communities have thrived together with, and sometimes alongside, inclusive congregations of the parish-type.<sup>68</sup>

The second dichotomy, and surely the most well-known, is actually a cross-indexed matrix of two pairs of antipodal forms of relations to the world in general. The two basic solutions to the problem or theodicy in religions of salvation, according to Weber, are (1) *asceticism*: “a methodological procedure for achieving religious salvation through rationalized ethical action” believed to be a distinctive divine gift—that is, “to master the world” as God’s (or the god’s) “instrument” in conformity to a radical religious ethic “governed by principles and rules,”<sup>69</sup> and (2) *mystic contemplation*: “primarily the quest to achieve rest in god and in him alone” usually by way of “the cessation of thought” and the “the absolute minimization of all outer and inner activity” in order to become the god’s “vessel.”<sup>70</sup> Immediately apparent is Weber’s effort to link this dichotomy to the one pertaining to prophecy, a connection that need not obtain outside Weber’s overall schema of two broad religious trajectories. Another difficulty arises from Weber’s tendency to oversimplify the ideal types in the interest of constructing as sharp a dichotomy as possible. Thus, no scholar of religion may rest content with a dichotomy that redefines asceticism as chiefly the spirit of

<sup>67</sup> St. Maximos the Confessor, *The Four Hundred Texts on Love* IV.55 (cf. I.24). ET: *The Philokalia*, II, 107.

<sup>68</sup> Weber’s contemporary, Ernst Troeltsch, explicated these forms of social organization in a sharper three-part sociological typology that Fr. Stanley S. Harakas has seen fit to use in “The Church and the Secular World,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, XVII, No. 1 (Spring, 1972), esp. 180-84. I, too, have adopted this typology in modified form in “Antinomical Typologies for An Orthodox Christian Social Ethic For the World, State, and Nation,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, XXVIII, No. 3 (Fall, 1983), 221-54.

<sup>69</sup> Weber, *op. cit.*, pp. 164, 167, 171, 174.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

approach to and control of the world (or *cosmos*), whereas mysticism is reduced to a spirit of avoidance and escape from the world. Weber complicated matters further when he grafted this dichotomy onto another one, giving rise thereby to four basic ideal types of religious attitudes toward the cosmos. The following chart represents an attempt to order the meandering discussion.<sup>71</sup>

	OTHER-WORLDLY (or world-rejecting)	INNER-WORLDLY
MYSTICISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—seeks to avoid subjective “desire” because of interference with pursuit of salvation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—lives in and participates in mundane order in resistant mode as index of enduring character of one’s “grace”</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—salvation defined as dissociation from world and total loss of interest in its concerns in deference to “truths” that exert an integrating influence on worldview</li> <li>—(examples: Hinduism and Buddhism)</li> <li>—seeks capacity to control worldly motivation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—seeks to deprive worldly interests of any positive meaning other than as temptations</li> <li>—(examples: Lutheranism and Pietism)</li> <li>—participation in institutions of world but in opposition</li> </ul>
ASCETICISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—goals are “devotional” not worldly: derives renewed assurances of “grace” from power to act in service of god</li> <li>—(example: Christian monasticism)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—rationalistic ethical personal patterning of life: rejects all emotional, aesthetic, etc., aspects</li> <li>—goal is “alert, methodical control of one’s own pattern of life and behavior”</li> <li>—(example: Calvinism)</li> </ul>

In any reckoning of the matrix, “other-worldly mysticism” and “inner-worldly asceticism” may be easily understood as polar opposites, while the differences between the other two ideal types seem so subtle as to be effectively non-existent. Perhaps the distinction consists in the intentionality behind the religious behavior: the “inner-worldly mystic” tries to escape from worldly temptation by thrusting himself or herself into the midst of temptation in society, while the “other-worldly ascetic” tries to withdraw physically from society in order to direct his or her control of “worldly” things such as spiritual passions and material goods to the greater glory of God or the gods.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 166-83. The introduction by Talcott Parsons in this particular edition has proved most helpful in this regard (*ibid.*, pp. li-liv).

In any case, the Orthodox mystical heritage shatters the claim to universality of this rigid four-part structure, for I cannot with any confidence locate Orthodoxy anywhere in the matrix. Indeed, Orthodoxy apparently rests on the imaginary point of intersection between inner-worldly mysticism and other-worldly asceticism. But since Weber's definitions of asceticism and mysticism were somewhat wanting, especially from an Orthodox perspective,<sup>72</sup> it would be better to dispense altogether with the two middle ideal types and to substitute a third, which serves paradoxically to resolve the dichotomy between the two obvious extremes—namely, *cosmic transfiguration*. In the light of the Incarnation the gap between fearful rejection of the world and joyful acceptance of it is bridged, and the transition is made possible from the inward struggle for self-denial as expressed through the virtue of humility and control of the flesh and mind to the state of ecstatic love for others and for the material world in general. Conquest of the “passions,” which St. Maximos, for example, defined as “an impulse of the soul that is contrary to nature,” is an essential ingredient in the Orthodox process of achieving *apatheia*, or equilibrium in the spirit whereby a person is free from bondage to any emotion or thought or imagination.<sup>73</sup> But such freedom is fulfilled in *active* mystical identification with one’s fellow humans in Christ. St. Symeon the New Theologian once referred to an anonymous man who embodied this perfect love:

His attitude was like that of Moses . . . and indeed of God Himself in that he did not in any way wish to be saved alone. Because he was spiritually bound to them by holy love in the Holy Spirit he did not want to enter the kingdom of heaven itself if it meant that he would be separated from [his brethren]. O sacred bond! O unutterable power! O soul of heavenly thoughts, or, rather soul borne by God and greatly perfected in love of God and of neighbor!<sup>74</sup>

In short, classic asceticism and other-directed mysticism find their nexus in the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. As Nicholas Arsevieu wrote:

<sup>72</sup> For mysticism, see Lossky's definition, *supra* n16. For asceticism (which is usually understood as self-limitation for spiritual purposes) as “creativity of one’s self” in an “*eschatology of transfiguration*,” see Fr. Georges Florovsky, “Christianity and Civilization,” *Collected Works*, II, 127, 128.

<sup>73</sup> St. Maximos the Confessor, *The Four Hundred Texts on Love* I.35. ET: *The Philokalia*, II, 56. For a useful compendium of texts on this topic dominated by the insights of Bishop Theophan the Recluse, a nineteenth century Russian hermit, see *The Art of Prayer: An Orthodox Anthology*, comp. Igumen Chariton of Valamo, trans. E. Kadloubovsky and E. M. Palmer (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), pp. 199-221.

<sup>74</sup> St. Symeon the New Theologian, *Catechetical Discourses* VIII.2. ET: Symeon the new Theologian, *The Discourses*, pp. 144f.

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On the heights of spiritual growth, where humility shines, where sinful thoughts are conquered and the heart ever more purified—there for the quickened sight the whole creation, the unpurified once a temptation and a stumbling block, is transfigured and ennobled . . . The whole world then becomes filled with beauty and meaning.<sup>75</sup>

Thus, Weber has furnished a useful terminology and conceptual framework that serves as a starting point for an understanding of the ethical style of the Orthodox mystical heritage and its relation to the world in general. Some radical modifications, however, are obviously necessary in the long run.

## Conclusion

While the potential contributions of Otto, Eliade, and Weber to Orthodox self-understanding seem fairly well established within the limitations elucidated above, the need to revise substantially the descriptive definition of religion offered at the outset of the present essay, pursuant to the brief examinations of the theories of the three religionists, does not seem imperative. Indeed, the insights of the three religionists may be grafted quite profitably onto the schematic form of my working definition—in particular, as amplifications of most of the phenomenological sub-categories. Thus, while the category of *canon* remains unchanged, the *credo* and the curse of any religion may be those components in which the fundamental problem of the sacred versus the profane is also addressed or ignored and which include beliefs about the nature of the numen, the possibility of numinous experience, the immediate and ultimate value of the cosmos as it now is, and the displacement of a worldview of natural sacredness with a profane outlook. Similarly, the *cause* now includes, in addition to its other features, the quality and role of the numinous experience of which the practitioner is presumed capable. The *career* history may be modified so as to encompass myths or other explanations of the origin, present status, and destiny of the religious person either as an individual or in community, especially vis-a-vis the profane person. *Cultus* also assumes a deeper significance in terms of liturgical efforts to resacralize the world. The category of *champion* ought to emphasize the ethical role of the role model(s), particularly the extent to which that ethical role is exemplary as opposed to didactic. Similarly, the *code* of any religion, though by definition a rational discursive element, may be transmitted primarily didactically through the inculcation of ethical principles, norms, or virtues, or mostly in an exemplary prophetic manner through the actual and recorded lives of certain venerable persons. Finally, the

<sup>75</sup> Arseviev, *Mysticism and the Eastern Church*, p. 51.

*community* component ought to reflect the revised Weberian insight about asceticism and mysticism. In addition to the usual sociological aspects such as composition and hierarchical arrangement within the socio-religious organization, community may entail the implementation of the fundamental attitude of the religion toward its social context: inner-worldly ascetical, other-worldly mystical, or cosmically transfigurative.

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# True Spirituality

Carl R. Stephens

*The master was asked, "What is spirituality?"<sup>1</sup>*

*He said, "Spirituality is that which succeeds in bringing one to inner transformation."*

*"But if I apply the traditional methods handed down by the master, is that not spirituality?"*

*"It is not spirituality if it does not perform its function for you. A blanket is no longer a blanket if it does not keep you warm."*

*"So spirituality does change?"*

*"People change and needs change. So what was spirituality once is spirituality no more. What generally goes under the name of spirituality is merely the record of past methods."*

*The Song of the Bird*<sup>2</sup>  
Anthony de Mello

<sup>1</sup> In classic literature spirituality refers to the probing and the responding to what seems to be a basic and mysterious yearning human beings seem to have for the Infinite God. It is the underlying dimension of consciousness that openly wants and searches for a transcendent fulfillment of human nature. For a Christian person, this probing and responding is done within the context of the historical and contemporary Christian experience, faith, and community. Spirituality can take many forms, but it always takes seriously an intrinsic love of God for creation, and a wounded but free human nature that is called and empowered toward conversion; i.e. toward ever deeper insight and deeper life in the image of God.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony de Mello, *The Song of the Bird* (Garden City, New York: Image Books, Division of Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984), p. 112.

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Don't cut the person to fit the coat. The only way to understand spirituality is to be "apprehended" by a spiritual experience. Spirituality is not to be known as we usually think of knowing. Spirituality refers to the most subtle dimension of awareness. It is the part of the self through which we sense ourselves belonging to a reality larger than our ego image; belonging to a larger, more valuable horizon of reality that impinges on all we are and do.<sup>3</sup>

The spiritual experience is beyond scientific instrument and description. Yet many, many people claim to have "known" this spiritual reality more certainly than any other. Such "intuitive" knowledge is the Judeo-Christian tradition is referred to as the "experiential knowledge of God." "This 'knowledge' (apprehension, experience) is wider and deeper than 'science' (comprehension, reflection)." We seem to know these realities, some say, as we become worthy of them; *i.e.*, less self-centered.<sup>4</sup>

This insight, articulated by the well known Christian spiritual writer Baron Friedrich Von Hugel is complemented by his definition of spirituality: "The deepest experience of the deepest fact."<sup>5</sup> Von Hugel goes on to say that non-spiritual facts or experience (physical, sexual, artistic, and social) are necessary for our balance; therefore, physical health is an appropriate concern of spiritual health. This suggests that the spiritual life is a dynamic process; perhaps a duality in the arduous process of resolution. It is, therefore, never finished. It is as Thomas Merton observed, "At best we are only beginners." Driving, competing, confused desires and fears bounce us from fleeting pain to fleeting pleasure, making us ever restless, causing us to seek ever more, allowing us to be rarely content with what we are or with what we have.

## Impact On Society

This interior tension is perhaps more complicated and difficult in an age of advanced technology and mammoth impersonal institutions, when many people seem to believe they have no effect on the course of their own social development. By discussing large social problems such as crime, health care, or poverty in terms of institutions rather

<sup>3</sup> The *self*, as I use the term, is the body, mind, spirit, interacting toward wholeness in the environment and in relation to God in the on-going creation of the universe. The self is more than ego. Ego is a self-construct that provides fundamental secondary control of the mind. As such, the ego frequently comes between the self and the first hand awareness of God. At the same time, the ego can inform us of God and of our existence, but only then through a process or sense of separation from them.

<sup>4</sup> Tilden Edwards, *Spiritual Friend: Reclaiming the Gift of Spiritual Direction*, (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1980), p. 233.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew Fox, *Original Blessing* (Sante Fe, New Mexico: Bear & Company, 1983), p. 88.

than individuals, academicians, legislators, religious leaders, and the news media reinforce this attitude. Responsibility for many important elements of our lives now lies with professionals. Physicians are supposed to keep us healthy, police to keep us safe from crime, economists are to make the nation prosperous, and so on. The sheer immensity of modern institutions has set in motion social forces seemingly beyond individual control.

The historian Arnold Toynbee believed that the turning within of a small segment of the population during a period of crisis was always helpful. He saw it not as a retreat from the troubles of the time, but as a step toward new resolution.<sup>6</sup> Many social observers believe that modern industrial society is now in such a period of crisis.

In 1974 a study by Andrew Greeley and William McReedy at the University of Chicago indicated that forty percent of all American adults could recall at least one spiritual awakening. This doubled the number reported by a 1962 Gallop poll. A more recent Gallop poll indicated eighty percent of those persons interviewed were significantly interested in their own spiritual health. Most acknowledged having at least one "spiritual experience" which they highly valued.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the best example of the current revival of interest in spiritual growth is seen in the millions of Americans who do meditation as a regular part of their lives. People have begun to turn inward, and this turning inward to experience what is popularly called the "healing silence" may have significant social effect.

Some research indicates that a person's level of wholeness significantly effects others in the ordinary inter-personal setting of everyday life. Psychologists Jeffry Shapiro and Therese Voog found that college students whose roommates demonstrated high levels of understanding, warmth, and genuineness achieved higher grades than those whose roommates showed lower levels of psychological integration. The roommate's level of psychological integration was a more accurate predictor of freshman achievement than academic ability measured by a standard aptitude test. In view of this and several similar studies, psychologists Charles Truax and Kevin Mitchell conclude, "If the untrained and minimally trained individual has a naturally high level of accurate empathy, non-possessive warmth, genuineness, and other inter-personal skills, then it seems likely, from the present vantage point that individuals who spend time with him

<sup>6</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, revised and abridged edition. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 314.

<sup>7</sup> Gerald R. May, *Care of Mind, Care of Spirit*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, New York, and Philadelphia, Harper and Row Publishers: 1982), pp. 20-22.

will be as helped, if not more helped, than if they were receiving formal psychotherapy from trained professionals.”<sup>8</sup>

Studies regularly show that stress and well being are contagious. If we were able to put a radioactive isotope on stress, we would see a path from one individual to another. For example, if a person leaves home in the morning upset or with a chip on his shoulder, the person's inner tension colors every interaction with other people throughout the day. All co-workers feel the tension, react to it, and pass it on in some degree to others. In the same way, feelings of optimism and well-being spread from one person to another. A cheerful person uplifts the spirits of whomever the person meets just as a distressed person stresses others. In human psychological transactions, positive and negative feelings are self-reinforcing.

One can imagine that simply by increasing the number of healthy people in a given population, a whole range of social problems that have their roots in individual emotional stress; crime, drug abuse, mental illness, and so on, might decrease. These spiritually healthy individuals would presumably provide the emotional nurture necessary to help distressed individuals find solutions to their problems. Equally important, the general increase in well-being among spiritually healthy persons would reinforce well-being in others. Spiritual awareness, nurtured through meditation, worship, service, and study experienced by even a small number of people would function like a catalyst for the growth of optimism and well-being throughout the population. By providing a climate for better personal relations, this collective decrease in tension would contribute to the improved functioning of the larger social institutions.

## Spiritual Growth

Four primary forces impinge on spiritual growth. The first of these is spiritual longing. An awareness of need for a deeper realization of God can surface at many points in a person's life. Often it is an event, circumstance, or right-of-passage that seems to prompt us toward introspection and reflection. This may happen in the course of crisis, when a crisis has passed, or in the luxury of security that usually comes with maturity. From one or more of these vantage points we ask: What is it all for? This realization and question can also occur spontaneously and without apparent cause.

Spiritual longing often takes the form of a desire to re-unite with what one might call the Ultimate Source of Being. We seem to

<sup>8</sup> C. B. Truax and K. Mitchell, “Research on Certain Therapists” Interpersonal Skills in Relation to Process and Outcome,” *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change: An Empirical Analysis*, A. E. Bergen and S. L. Garfield, eds. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1971), pp. 299-305.

know vaguely that at some primeval level we are in and of God and that God is in and through us. Often this craving for re-union is associated with the desire to experience or to express unconditional love. Sometimes these longings for God seem to be triggered by a visionary or unitive experience and sometimes without apparent stimulus.

A second force, overlapping with and causing our longing for God, is God's longing for us. This can be discerned most clearly when our spiritual hunger arises for no apparent reason. Often it can be seen in retrospect. It often appears to be behind many of the crises or other life-changing experiences which seem to prompt us into spiritual searching. It is evident in the innocent faith of children and "simple people."

The third force is the reality that opposes our growth toward deeper realization and freedom in the spiritual life. Spiritual growth demands much that we may be unwilling to give. Spiritual growth threatens to loosen our cherished attachments, to change or dissolve our images of ourselves, and it reveals truths about ourselves that we are unwilling to admit. Further, spiritual growth asks a sacrifice of our time, energy, and resources; it demands our hearts. It should not be surprising, although paradoxical, to find ourselves resisting that which we consciously most desire, or distorting spiritual truths into self-contrived fragments that we hope might give us the fullness that we desire.

The fourth force, which also functions in opposition to spiritual growth, comes not so much from the personal psyche as from sources that can only be called evil. Evil takes many forms. It can, for example, find expression in cultural and societal attitudes that encourage attachment to desire and self aggrandizement. It can occur when something other than God becomes our ultimate concern. In the course of intentional spiritual searching, evil can surface in the form of real spiritual forces (spirits) that seek to divert or sabotage our journey toward the deeper realization of God's truth and will.<sup>9</sup>

Whatever its specific manifestation, evil functions to subvert our surrender to God and to turn it into a capitulation to willfulness or to darkness. Theologically, one might finally say that evil forces are ultimately of, or at least permitted, by God; but from the standpoint of human experience, they clearly work to turn one's attention and intention away from God.

At any given moment in a person's life, these four forces can be seen in a dynamic interplay. Although the balance may change and shift in a variety of ways over time, this interplay determines both the

<sup>9</sup> Matthew Fox, ed., *Meditations With Meister Eckhart* (Sante Fe, New Mexico: Bear and Company, 1983), p. 90.

content and the nature of spiritual sensitivity. In recent years there have been many attempts to establish correlations between human spiritual experience and such psycho-physiological factors as brain-wave patterns, right/left brain balance, life stages, and personality styles. These endeavors are fascinating and suggest that at primitive levels there seem to be connections. Many spiritual experiences, for example, have transcendent or unitive qualities that seem to be associated with relatively slow and synchronous brain-wave patterns. Spiritual growth at some stages seems to be characterized by enchantment or intuitive and aesthetic sensitivities which have been associated with the right side of the brain. Certain life stages, notably those associated with identity formation and "mid-life crisis," are especially right for spiritual conversion experiences. Intuitive and feeling personality styles seem to have an easier time dealing with spiritual subtleties than do personalities of a more intellectual or obsessive orientation.

Such hints of connections can stimulate an almost irresistible passion to master our spiritual destiny. If we could only learn how to produce proper brain-waves—if we could only discover a way of balancing the brain's left and right hemispheres, perhaps we could set up a spiritual guidance program for people in mid-life crisis. If we could develop certain spiritual disciplines, we might teach thought-oriented people how to be more aesthetically sensitive. Any of these endeavors might have value, but to see them as ways of accomplishing spiritual growth runs close to playing God. But on the other hand, because we are learning more effective ways of influencing our brains, our bodies, and our chemistry, we may become more responsive to God's call to us.

Some very precise observations show that slow, harmonious, brain-waves associated with spiritual experiences are also associated with certain hypnotic trances and with a wide range of other subjective experiences. It has been shown that the left brain can take over the function of the right, that spiritual conversions are not really determined by life stages, and that many intellectually oriented people experience profound spiritual openings, while many of their intuitive peers do not. While research goes on and as we become enriched by it, we must always recognize that spirituality is a constantly surprising process in which we participate as novices and never masters.<sup>10</sup>

As has already been noted, the process of spiritual growth is impinged upon by unconscious forces in a multiplicity of ways. Not all of these unconscious forces act against spiritual growth. As a matter of fact, the very heart of our longing for God often remains unconscious until the time is right for it to emerge. For example, it is not uncommon for people to feel a subtle uneasiness in the midst of

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22-26.

a life that otherwise seems filled with satisfaction. All one's basic needs may be met and all one's relationships going well, and yet there may be a deep inner nagging, a longing for something more or something different that might make life truly complete. Regardless of the context in which it may be submerged, this uneasiness represents the barest edge of our hunger for God, surfacing at first as an awareness, as little more than a nudge, which mysteriously turns into an identifiable spiritual longing. Sometimes it is never so identified.<sup>11</sup> The timing of its birth into full awareness is, I think, something that no human being can engineer. We are not wise enough to know when it should happen. Our hands are too clumsy to force it to happen. We can only attempt to foster the kind of setting and atmosphere that will not impede its unfolding. Most importantly, we need to refrain from any attempt to label this deep and subtle uneasiness as pathological. In the absence of a clearly identifiable disorder, it is terribly destructive to encourage the dulling or denial of this deepest existential discomfort. We must not anesthetize ourselves against spiritual hunger nor dull our appetite for spiritual experience. And that is precisely what we often do.

We ease our longing for love and union with furtive passing intensities with each other. We take our existential distress to therapy, assuming we can remedy it if we can learn how to live correctly. We seek our deepest meaning and hope through the work of our hands. We kill our inner longing and dull our awareness with tranquilizers, alcohol, food, work and a host of behavioral seductions that we falsely call recreation. True recreation, like true rest, leaves us with greater energy and clearer awareness. But when we narcotize ourselves, regardless of the means, we are left clouded and sapped of strength.

If we are truly open to our spiritual potential, we will be able to acknowledge that pain and pleasure, joy and sadness, success and failure . . . all these things may work either for or against our spirit. Similarly, a given unconscious desire or feeling does not necessarily work against us, only that our conscious desires and feelings do not always work for us. The real importance of spiritual experiences can be considered only in terms of how they change and affect our lives in relation to God, ourselves, and each other.

Although we tend to judge whether we are "whole" by how we feel or by what satisfying state of objectivity we have achieved, the New Testament declares unyieldingly that our salvation and our movement toward perfection and wholeness is rooted in God's acceptance of us and not in how we feel or think. Spiritual health is not to be reduced to some condition we can manipulate within ourselves. To put it most simply, our acceptance of God's acceptance

<sup>11</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, (New York, Harper and Row Publishers, 1978), pp. 77-79.

liberates us from self-centered concern about spiritual attainment and directs us outward to serve in and for the world about us.

## A Strong Sense Of Self

The first ontological characteristic of a spiritually healthy person is a firm sense of self. How does one define the self? What does having a firm sense of self have to do with spiritual health? The answer to these questions points to the heart of a paradoxical spiritual reality. The spiritual journey is a solitary journey that *must* be done in relationship with others. Spiritual health requires an ebb and flow from solitude to company. One is always irrevocably alone in one's spiritual growth while at the same time always in the company of fellow travelers as well as in the company of the divine.

What then does spiritual life invite us to? Not to introversion or to any condition of pure consciousness alone, but to genuine meeting, to authentic liking, to honest caring for others. The journey to God does not take us out of the world, but into it.

. . . in truth, there is no God-seeking because there is no where one could not find him. How foolish and hopeless must one be to leave one's ways of life to seek God. Even if one gained all the wisdom of solitude and all the power of concentration, one would miss him.<sup>12</sup>

The road to our authentic self is through the forgetting of ourselves in a loyalty so complete that our self takes shape without our concern for it.

The ego is a fragile thing, a mere function of our relating to the world. It is governed by whatever set of values we have adopted. It is changeable and insubstantial, in a sense a thing of the moment. The self is both what we deeply are and what we are always becoming. It is our life-long project. For the person who is a Christian, the self is nourished not on subjectivity, but upon Christ who is the paradigm for the human being in the world.

The self has to do with three basic dimensions of the person. It has to do with one's awareness: the quality of awareness, the content of awareness, and the clarity of awareness. Secondly, it has to do with one's images of one's self and the world, the value placed on those images, their stability, and the degree to which they approximate reality. Thirdly, it has to do with the way one's desires and fears impinge upon one's feelings and behavior.

Psychology and spirituality are two different ways of relating to one's basic reality, the self. Psychology, however, seems unable to address this quest for the self without reducing the quest to a theory based only on the meeting of personal needs. Indeed it is only a

<sup>12</sup> Fox, *Original Blessing*, p. 265.

personal faith that can speak of the immensity of the longing each person feels for a firm sense of self. Religion can use psychology to inform its searching, but when psychology tries to use religion for *its* end, only a travesty results. It is only faith that can adequately describe the needs and forces that motivate the human being.

The spiritually healthy person has a “firm sense of self,” and seldom feels “trapped” by job, financial responsibility, spouse, children, parents, personal history or religious beliefs. The spiritually healthy person understands the person as having the capacity to be continually nourished by an uninterrupted flow of creative intelligence that flows from the core of being. The mystics and the saints have talked freely about this experience, but most of us have not been able to make use of what they have to say because it seems so foreign to our personal experience. Our need for approval and our need to belong have denied us this gift of spiritual freedom.

The persons with a firm sense of self have an unlimited confidence in their capacity to accept responsibility for what they choose. When necessary, they find fulfillment in breaking boundaries that have become restricting, but they feel no need to rebel without cause.

The persons who enjoy a firm sense of self might best be termed invincible without being invulnerable. They can say with the apostle Paul:

Not that I am alluding to want, for I have learned to find resources in whatever my circumstances. I know what it is to be brought low, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have been thoroughly initiated into the human lot with all its ups and downs—fullness and hunger, poverty and plenty. I have strength for anything through him who gives me power. But it was kind of you to share the burden of my troubles.<sup>13</sup>

When we muster the courage to live in this kind of faith, the emotional hallmark of our spiritual awareness will be an unshakable base-line of happiness. We will develop a friendly, lack of self consciousness about everyday living. No matter where we find ourselves, we will never waste time wishing our circumstances were different. Rather than wasting the precious present, we will make the best of our circumstances and derive joy from the existential situation. Because of our faith and the knowledge that all things necessary will be supplied, we will not need to prove ourselves at every hand. We will not waste time in useless bickering, debating, or blaming. While we will enjoy discussing almost anything, we will feel no need to force others to accept our point of view. Our

<sup>13</sup> *Philippians* 4:11.

interpersonal relations will not become “contests,” nor will we be seduced into feeling a need for “oneupsmanship.” We will know, for sure, that no amount of blaming will bring happiness.

While disappointments may trigger a bout with the blues for others, a person at the peak of spiritual wellness takes disappointments in stride. The person is able to enjoy everyday life regardless of unexpected events. One of the greatest assets is the ability to live fully in the moment. The spiritually healthy person accepts life without self-delusion or self-punishment knowing that doing so is the only way to happiness and success. Above all, the person with the firm sense of self never makes the mistake of pinning hopes on anyone or anything. The person avoids the trap of believing they will be happy *if* they get a promotion, meet the right person, write a best-seller, inherit money, or get a degree. These wise individuals know that their only source of happiness is always within themselves.

## **Authenticity**

Authenticity is the hallmark of a person living in spiritual health. Spiritually healthy persons are not pretentious and rarely feel the need to portray themselves as what they are not. Honesty is the mark of every encounter. Lying is seen as a means of self-deception that ultimately denies the opportunities for happiness. But honesty is never a weapon. Should expressing a sentiment hurt someone’s feelings, the opinion is withheld.

The spiritually healthy person does not indulge in self-hate, nor complain about such things as physical endowments. Whether tall or short, athletic or unathletic, brilliant or of average intelligence, the spiritually healthy person accepts himself. Rather than wishing things were otherwise, existing strengths are developed and enjoyed. Life is lived fully in the present with a congruence between thought, feelings, and actions.

## **Interested In Personal Growth**

Persons who are healthy in spirit are always interested in personal growth for themselves and for others. They are willing to engage a physician, “a bag womn,” a teacher, a clerk in a store, or a garage mechanic, if there appears to be an opportunity for growth and change on either of their parts. A spiritually healthy person wants to learn everything possible from life. This person actively seeks to experience the new and the interesting. The spiritually healthy person finds renewal in change.

This particular characteristic, an openness to renewal and change, is worthy of special note. Change, which almost always produces stress, is welcomed by the person who enjoys spiritual health. The healthy person seems to thrive on change. There is no

interest in "change for change's sake," but whenever change is necessary, the spiritually healthy person takes it in stride and experiences the change as an opportunity to learn and grow. A recurrent theme in the literature of spiritual health is the necessity to cast off ego, to abandon the self, *to change*. The Christian experience speaks of this as, "being born anew" or "being born from above." To put it plainly, the Christian faith is concerned with the fulfillment of the person, not the loss of self or ego.

To change in response to the stimuli of life means that we become more mature. Becoming mature in our spiritual health means to be intellectually alive, always to be open to new thoughts and always to be in pursuit of new truths. St. Agustine encourages us in this direction when he says, "Where I found truth, there I found God."<sup>14</sup> Simone Weil writes, "Christ likes us to prefer truth to Him because before Christ He is truth. If one turns aside from Him to go for truth, one will not go far before falling into His arms."<sup>15</sup>

Martin Buber also gives helpful guidance when he says, "By no means . . . can it be our task . . . to turn away from the things and beings that we meet on our way . . . even those that attack our hearts. Our task is precisely to get in touch with them by hallowing our relationship to them, with what manifests itself in them as beauty, pleasure, enjoyment. Hasidim teaches that rejoicing in the world . . . leads to rejoicing in God."<sup>16</sup> Persons interested in their spiritual health are interested in what they will become not simply what they will abandon.

## Generous With Love

Persons who enjoy spiritual wellness are generous in their love, but they do not get involved in one intimate relationship after another. In fact, a truly spiritual person would regard "flitting from one intimate relationship to another" as a sign of immaturity and dependency. Spiritual health makes it unnecessary to search for a surrogate "mommy and daddy." Though spiritual health frequently asks that we become "spiritual friends" with a few select persons, it precludes being surrogate "mommy or daddy" to those persons who share the spiritual quest.

A person whose life is energized by the traditional spiritual disciplines will want the "significant others" in their lives to be autonomous and self-fulfilling. They will desire an independent fullness of life for themselves and for their loved-ones.

The generosity of this person's loving will cherish an ample measure of privacy for the self and for loved ones. Equal pleasure

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth O'conner, *Letters to Scattered Pilgrims*, (San Francisco and New York, Harper and Row, Publishers: 1979), p. 109.

<sup>15</sup> Matthew Fox, *Original Blessing*, p. 184.

<sup>16</sup> Edwards, *op. cit.*

will be found in being alone and in being with chosen loved ones. For a dependent person aloneness is terrifying because it means loneliness. But for a person who honors the spiritual, solitude is a source of strength and satisfaction.

Love in families, and in the community of faith, is often experienced as incomplete because we do not understand that wholeness is dependent on an engagement of *all* feelings, positive and negative. The most popular conception is that the negative feeling must be eliminated rather than treated as integral to our lives. Our negative feelings sometimes have the precious function of driving us toward holiness.<sup>17</sup> Anger, for example, helps us to know that we have been afraid or hurt. It energizes us to set things right for ourselves and to make a new thrust toward love. I became a much better parent when I learned to express my anger appropriately to my children. When I became angry after their having done something dangerously foolish, they knew at a deeper level that I took their well-being seriously.

In the name of love we are often afraid of the negativity in others and tremble with the expression of our own. This makes it difficult for us to make ourselves clear. In our fear, in the name of love, we will call the same things by different names, viewing the same facts as our loved ones, but coming to radically different conclusions. We will misunderstand and be misunderstood and find anger and resentment growing inside us.

Perhaps no experience is more characteristic of an average person in a spiritual crisis than the frustration of trying to love and to be loved. As a chaplain and pastoral counsellor, I spend a great deal of time with persons who are afraid to love and be loved. One classic misunderstanding holds that a person must love and be loved in order to be happy. In fact, the reverse is true. Happiness is the foundation as well as the result of loving. Non-possessive warmth, caring and love are natural to the happy individual. No matter how hard the unhappy person tries to love, the efforts are destined to frustration because the person lacks the inner sense of well-being basic to the ability to love. In a world grounded in love, and in human beings created to give and receive love, it is no small wonder that the greatest human suffering is rooted in the fear of rejection and abandonment. God created us with free will and also made it extraordinarily difficult for us not to choose the way of the relationship of love. Each time we do not choose to love, our life becomes more narrow and constricted. In God's world we naturally suffer when we do not choose each other.

<sup>17</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, pp. 69-83.

## The Tragi-Comic Nature Of Life

Spiritually healthy persons have a clear sense of the tragi-comic nature of life. They have a sense of humor. They enjoy life. They laugh easily, and they readily laugh at themselves. Charles Schultz, a man of faith and the creator of "Peanuts," has enabled many of us to laugh at ourselves. One of my favorite cartoons shows Snoopy in the first frame bouncing gleefully past Charlie Brown and Lucy. They are clearly chagrined. In the second frame Lucy says, "Look at that crazy dog!" In the next frame Charlie Brown says, "I sure wish I could be happy all the time." In the last frame Lucy says, "Not me, it's hard to feel sorry for yourself when you're happy."

What Schultz captures in this cartoon lets most of us get a glimpse of ourselves and laugh. Charlie Brown represents everyone ready to admit how much happier they would like to be. Lucy represents everyone who finds reasons, sensible or not, for not chasing after what "realistic people" know to be "unrealistic." And Snoopy, gleefully bouncing along, tells us that full and lasting happiness is natural, at least for a dog.

Clergy, politicians, philosophers, and "clowns" have passed the question of individual happiness back and forth to one another like a football for hundreds of years. One group insists wealth is the key to happiness, while another says happiness lies in the simple life with few comforts.<sup>18</sup> Others insist the fulfillment of duty to family, country or God is the path to happiness.<sup>19</sup> Still others insist that the path to happiness is a return to nature, to sensual pleasures, to simply being yourself. Though ideas about happiness have been many, happiness has remained elusive for most people. This is a spiritual issue.

The humor of the spiritually healthy person is equal to their capacity for compassion. Ashley Montague in his study, *Growing Young*, reveals an amazing finding. Of all the animal species we know, the human is unique in his capacity to continue to play into adulthood. An insect never plays, a chimpanzee plays hard as a youngster but stops playing as an adult, an adult human being can play right up to death . . . and even perhaps with death. "Perhaps the time has come for us to play with God more than to pray to God, and in our play true prayer will emerge."<sup>20</sup>

Meister Eckhart left an interesting definition for play. "To live without a why, to work without a why, to love without a why."<sup>21</sup> This is play that leads to compassion which is what people ought to

<sup>18</sup> Fox, pp. 226-228.

<sup>19</sup> Edwards, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> Fredrick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1978), pp. 77-79.

<sup>21</sup> Fox, *Meditations With Meister Eckhart*, p. 123.

have for one another caught, as we are, in the very common predicament of being human.

## Enjoy Helping Others

Persons with a vital faith enjoy helping others and look for opportunities to do so. They offer their help, however, as peers rather than as one who *has*, giving to one who *has not*.

Sir Gawain of King Arthur's court went out in search of the Holy Grail largely because of his lust for Queen Guinevere. As he rode out of the city, he tossed a gold coin to a beggar sitting at the gate. After years of searching for the Holy Grail, Gawain returned to the city as a broken and destitute man. He sat down beside the beggar and shared his last possession, a piece of bread. In this sharing the beggar became the Christ. "I tell you this: Anything you do for one of my brothers here, however humble, you did for me."

I learned this lesson, as vividly as any lesson I have ever learned, at three in the morning on the wards of the Veterans Hospital in Houston, Texas. I was the chaplain-on-call. An obviously irritated nurse called to tell me that a patient wanted to talk with me. She went on to report that he mistakenly thought he was dying. I dressed and went to be with him. When I entered the ward, there was a solitary light at the far end of the cavernous room housing thirty-eight men. I went to the nurses' station and the nurse pointed to the bed with the light.

As I approached, I could hear a low, rhythmic moan. It was clearly the cry of a person in pain. I called his name, introduced myself, and I asked, "How can I help?" His response startled me. This tiny, shriveled old man, drawn into himself like a tight, black ball, whispered, "I've got to piss." I said, "Sir, you have a catheter, and that should take care of your need to void." He said, "I have to have help for it to work. Someone has to roll me over on my back, push on my chest and on my legs, and when I am open enough, that thing will work and I will get relief." I was livid. I had been awakened from a sound sleep to hear this. I started toward the nurses' station to make a nurse do something for this man. For some reason I stopped, and I asked him again to tell me how to help. I then rolled him over on his back and pressed with all my strength against his chest and on his legs. When his body was open enough, the urine started to flow, and he began to sing the doxology. It never sounded better or more real to me in all my life.

I had helped this man, but I had received one of the most important gifts of my life. I knew first-hand when I had done something for "one of my brothers, however humble," I had done it for God. Spiritually healthy people enjoy helping others and look for opportunities to do so because it is a joy to do so.

## Meaning And Purpose

The person who enjoys a sustaining sense of meaning and purpose is usually healthy in every respect—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Work is satisfying and the person knows the joy of contributing to the welfare of the community. Spiritual health requires the person to function as a responsible member of the human race. Only secondarily is pride taken in belonging to a particular group, community, religion, or nation. Viktor Frankel writes about meaning and purpose.

I remember my dilemma in a concentration camp when faced with a man and woman who were close to suicide. Both had told me that they expected nothing more from life. I asked both of my fellow prisoners whether the question was really what we expected from life. Was it not, rather, what life was expecting from us. I suggested that life was awaiting something from them.

But even a man who finds himself in the greatest distress, in which neither activity or creativity can bring values to life, nor experience giving meaning to it—even such a man can still give his life a meaning by the way he faces his fate, his distress. By taking his unavoidable suffering upon himself, he may yet realize values. Thus, life has a meaning to the last breath. For the possibility of realizing values our very attitude with which we face our unchangeable suffering—this possibility exists to the very last moment. I call such values attitudinal values. The right kind of suffering—facing your fate without flinching—is the highest achievement that has been granted to man.<sup>22</sup>

Among those same lines Sam Keene writes of meaning and purpose.

Each man enters into life wounded, deformed, and graceless: Parents injure their children with prejudice, fear, and carelessness. Societies cripple minorities by injustice and hatred; nature brings to birth many of her children with defects and abnormalities. A central task each man faces in the formation and identity is an acceptance of the deformative and limitations which are his destiny. Self-acceptance is the prelude to responsibility and creative change. Before we may be graceful, we must accept our gracelessness. Mere acceptance and

<sup>22</sup> Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search For Meaning* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963f.).

resignation, however, are not sufficient; gratitude is, finally, necessary to full integration and self-acceptance . . . Thus, gratitude and forgiveness are both essential for wholeness. That resentment that causes us to despise our wounds and our limits is finally directed not at something that is accidental to our being but at our being itself. Gratitude alone allows us the freedom from our wounds and our past which is necessary for autonomous action. Gracefulness requires that, in the end, we become able to say of those events we are tempted to despise and reject: "in enduring them, I have become more and more authentic." . . . Every man covets the opportunity to take the measure of his life and be able to pronounce the judgment, "It is good." It is only to the degree that we are able to forge the diverse moments of pain and pleasure, emptiness and fullness, loneliness and love, failure and success into something meaningful and graciously whole that we are able to escape that resentment and bitterness that formed the roots of narcissism, neurosis, and despair. Finally, the most significant index we have of the stature of a man is the amount of pain and tragedy he has been able to bear and still rejoice in the gift of life. We cannot make unambiguous life the condition of gratitude; if we do, rejoicing and celebration could not be carried on where we ignore the tragic character of actual existence or be postponed until we reach Utopia or apocalypse. We may (and indeed must) speak out the necessity for gratitude without being blind to all that transpires to deny each man his birthright of the possibility of graceful existence.<sup>23</sup>

## Appreciation And Reverence For Life

A spiritually healthy person has a keen appreciation for every aspect of life. What to others has become mundane, remains new and fresh for the spiritually healthy person. A skyscraper is as inspiring as a sequoia. Because the person finds it easy to enjoy the self, the person does not have to chase entertainment. This person appreciates all of life, savors every aspect, every pleasure, every pain. The whole creation offers its fullness and the person is fulfilled in knowing himself to be a co-creator with God in the on-going creation of the universe.

Frequently we ignore reality in the name of religion; we deny certain aspects of life because of our "beliefs." Organized religion

<sup>23</sup> James Fowler and Sam Keene, *Life Maps*, circa p. 112.

has impeded the healthy expression of passion because of an institution's inability to appreciate many aspects of life. Interestingly enough, Jesus, was not bound by institutional constraints. He was aware of the passing of time, but no slave to it. His appreciation for the health and wholeness of children was an element of his teaching that led to his crucifixion. Jesus' appreciation for women and for suffering humanity inform us about these subjects today. Jesus' appreciation for nature, in the quiet times and in the stormy, teaches us to see the beauty and the awesomeness of God's power in the natural world.

The spiritually healthy person has a reverence for life. This reverence for life manifests itself in an appreciation for one's self. It understands and appreciates that part of self which strives for meaning and purpose and which we call the soul. This reverence for life enables a person to recognize that we are unalterably changed by every person whom we know. The spiritually healthy person is concerned for the hungry, for the bitter, for the deprived, for the handicapped; and attempts to alter life's circumstances in ways that effect change for the unfortunate ones who suffer. Spiritually healthy persons reverence and respect people who are very different from themselves. Differences of race, creed, and ethnic origin provide opportunities to expand horizons and to enlarge the scope and function of reality in ways that enrich being, enable abundant life, and validate the effort we spend in nurturing and caring for our spiritual wholeness and health.

## Conclusion

Practicing the spiritual disciplines opens the individual to an awareness that lifts the self out of the self, so to speak, into the vast and subtle world of spiritual consciousness, a "timeless moment" that is now. This may seem an odd or frustrating conclusion, especially since most of the article has explored the tangible characteristics which we can expect to develop as a result of the spiritual quest. The characteristics of a spiritually healthy person which we have discussed are *partial*, less than comprehensive, states of spiritual health. Each characteristic is different from the other and can be developed to the exclusion and at the expense of the others.

The different levels of spirituality are something like the various waves of the ocean—each wave is certainly different from all others. Some waves, near the shore, are stronger and more powerful, while others, farther out, are weaker and less powerful. But each wave is different from all the others. The surfer, like the student of spirituality, can select a particular wave, catch it, ride it for its uniqueness. If the waves were the same, this could not be done. Each characteristic of a spiritually healthy person is like a particular wave.

We can “catch” any of them with the right technique and enough practice.

Spirituality, however, is not so much a particular wave as the water itself. As with the ocean, there is no boundary, no difference, no separation between the water in any of the waves. The water is equally present in all waves, in the sense that no wave is wetter than another.

Seeking the individual characteristics of spiritual health is like jumping from one wave of experience to another in search of water. So perhaps we can begin to see why, strictly speaking, there is no particular path to spiritual health. The characteristics of spirituality are not particular experiences among other experiences. Spirituality is not even a big experience as opposed to small experiences, of one wave instead of another. Rather, it is every wave or person experienced just as it is. There is nothing but present experience, there is definitely no path to that which always is. There is no path to wetness if you are already standing shoulder deep in water.

Meister Eckhart writes, “Thou shall know God without image and without means (without path).” In other words, there are no means to the Ultimate, no techniques, no paths, and this is only because it is its nature to be omnipresent, ever present everywhere. There is a sense in which our difficulty is the same as that of individuals who jump from wave to wave in search of wetness. We don’t hold still long enough to understand our present condition. In always looking elsewhere, we are moving *away* from the answer. If we are always looking beyond, the essential understanding of the present condition will not unfold. Our very search, our very desire, forestalls the discovery of the joy of spiritual experience. In short, it is this *present experience* which always holds the key to our search. We are not really searching for the answer—we are in fact living it without knowing it.

As a person takes up the spiritual disciplines, an exasperating but unmistakable fact will be increasingly clear: nobody wants spirituality. The tragedy of the human predicament is that we are more often than not resisting spiritual wholeness. It is certain that we are always “wave-jumping,” resisting the present wave of experience. Like Adam and Eve, we are always resisting God’s presence, wanting to know more, to be something else.

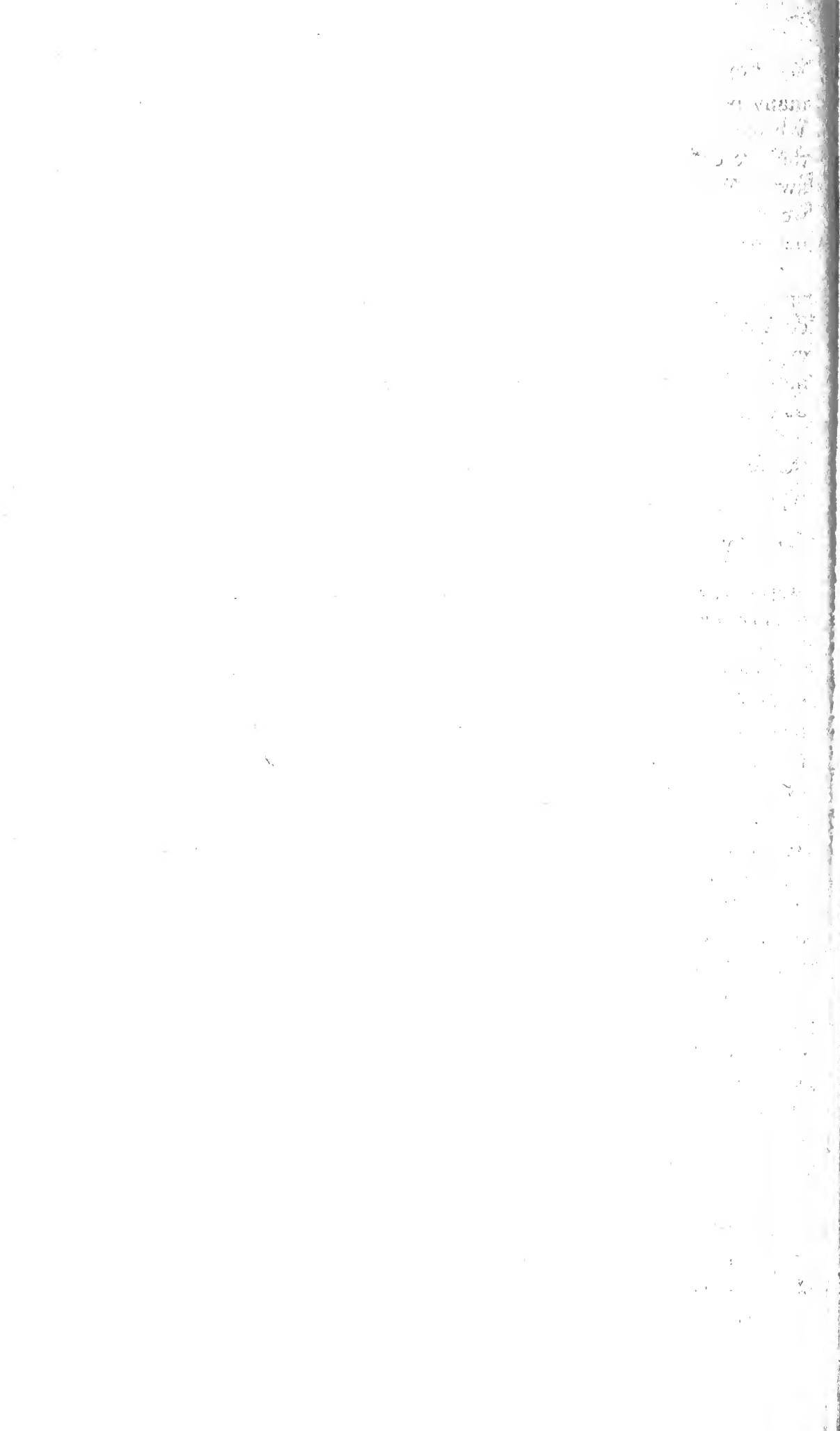
The first and most difficult task of a person seeking spiritual health is to come to understand and to work through the resistance to one’s shadow. One does not try to get rid of the resistance, bypass it, or ignore it. Instead, the person attempts to see *how* and *why* there is resistance to the shadow side of oneself. Once the person sees that resisting aspect of the self is the crux of the difficulty, then the person can dare to lower resistance and begin to touch the shadow side of the self.

The most debilitating reality I know is the unwillingness of many people to look upon everything, as a whole, just as it is, now. We tend to look away, to withdraw awareness for *what is*, to avoid the present. And because we tend to *look away*, we tend to *move away*. With these subtle resistances, this looking and moving away, we block spiritual wholeness, and we continue to “lose” our true nature.

As we try to move away from the present world, the world appears to move *past* us. The eternal present thus appears bounded, constricted, limited. It is sandwiched on one side by all the experiences we have gone past, and on the other side by all the future moments we are trying to run into. Thus, to move away is to create a before and after, a point of departure in the past from which we move to a point of destiny in the future. Our present is reduced to the *moving* itself, a quiet, and sometimes not-so-quiet running way. In the process, the present *moment* passes, and we are left wanting.

The path to spiritual health about which I have spoken  
is beautiful  
and pleasant  
and joyful  
and familiar  
like a new stanza of a familiar song.  
Let whoever has found his way  
seek no other  
so that God  
who is whole and entire  
and under whom we stand  
will possess you whole and entire.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Matthew Fox, *Meditations With Meister Eckhart*, p. 72.



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## Book Review

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### **The Five Divorces of a Healthy Marriage**

*Harold Straughn*

*CBP Press, 1986, Softcover, \$11.95, 159 pp.*

**Harold Straughn is a writer, editor and lecturer for business, religious and educational organizations who lives and works in New York city.**

The premise of this book is simple: divorce is necessary in a marriage. As the provocative title suggests, a healthy marriage will have more than one divorce. These divorces are actually growth producing events which take a couple from a stage of immaturity to a new, more mature dimension of their relationship. This notion provides an encouraging alternative to the finality of legal divorce, and may give a couple in difficulty a cause for hope. Imagine the response when a couple hears a counsellor say, "I think you should divorce," then to discover that you mean their relationship in its present state of crisis is a unique opportunity for them to enter a new stage in their relationship.

As the sub-title "Experiencing the Stages of Love" suggests, this is a stage-theory approach to personal relational growth. Straughn borrows his construct from the book *The Four Loves* by C. S. Lewis and expands upon Lewis' four to include a total of six stages of love. They are: Eros, Love as Dependency; Storge, Love by the Rules; Philia, Love as Friendship; Dikaiosune, Love as a Declaration of Independence; Agape, Love Greater than the Sum of Its Parts; and, Ktisis, Creative Love Beyond Boundaries. The correlation between each of these six stages to the personality theories of writers such as Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, Erik Erickson, James Fowler, Daniel J. Levinson and Gail Sheehy is included in the treatment of each. Eros corresponds to infancy, storge to childhood,

philia to preadolescence; dikaiosune to adolescence and agape to postadolescence. The movement through each stage does not mean a divorce from the positive influences of that stage but accepting the demands of the new one.

The author's preface explains the arresting title; the introduction, the genesis of the work including definitions of the six Greek words and a thorough schematic showing each divorce, style of loving, personality stage, cultural influence and characteristic of loving relationships relative to each stage. By the time chapter one begins there is no doubt what the author is going to say and how he plans to say it.

Besides its textbook flavor, this book is also part sermon (his treatment of agape is soundly biblical and very inspiring), part *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* (each chapter is preceded with selected quotations), part case study (the lives of three couples are followed through the stages), and part dialogue (each chapter ends with intimacy fostering questions that will help the reader to interpret his or her own experience in light of the material). In addition, there is an extensive bibliography of over 60 related titles.

Straughn also provided relevant models of what he calls "creative love" with profiles of such disparate couples as Abraham and Sarah, Mary and Joseph ("the world's most famous stepfamily,") Abelard and Eloise, Martin and Katrin Luther, and Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. What he calls "heroic love" is profiled in three modern couples: Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward (*Lovers of High Risk*), Roy Rogers and Dale Evans (*King of the Cowboys and Queen of the West*), and Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King (*Can Love Transcend Death?*).

To the question "Where do we go from here?" Straughn suggests an answer highly supportive of the traditional relationship, *i.e.*, monogamy. He believes the true pioneering breakthroughs in consciousness and understanding will continue to be achieved in one-man, one-woman relationships, "still the simplest and quickest way to intimacy." He does not believe the search for intimacy will be found in the experimental lifestyles of recent years—open marriages, homosexual relationships or communal marriages for the simple reason that "all such experiences involve extending the intimacies of marriage into other types of relationships." On the contrary, he believes that these relationships "develop as they apply the discoveries of monogamy to their own areas."

As Straughn states, "Divorce has often become the twentieth-century rite of passage to a new stage of consciousness. Marriage in

our time has become the principal casualty of individual growth and the search for identity." Yet he adds, "This book is a celebration of marriage." For Straughn the ultimate value is love and the ultimate pleasure principle is the commitment of marriage. As such, marriage offers the opportunity for breathtaking variety of new styles and new levels of experience. While only a few couples will take the risks and make the sacrifices to discover the full potential of their relationship, those who are willing to take the risks will find in this book an affirmation of their search and helpful guidelines for building a healthier relationship.

Jeffrey L. Neuberger, Ch, Capt  
USAF

## **Will It Liberate? Questions About Liberation Theology**

*Michael Novak*

*Paulist Press, Mahwah, New Jersey, 1987. 311 pages. Hardback \$14.95*

Michael Novak holds the George Frederick Jewett Chair in Religion and Public Policy at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington. He has earned degrees in theology, philosophy of religion, and economics from Harvard, Catholic University, and the Gregorian Institute in Rome. His most significant contributions to the public debate have been as author and diplomat.

Michael Novak argues that there are two theologies of liberation operating in the Western Hemisphere. The older, North American, frees people from political, economic, and moral/cultural bondage. The Statue of Liberty was its first symbol.

Latin American liberation theology is new, dating from the 1968 Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medillin, Colombia. It seeks to eliminate oppression, poverty, and hunger, and to accomplish the redistribution of unjustly held wealth and land. It would level the inequities of society by remolding the human spirit. It would eliminate private ownership and subordinate individual achievement to the general welfare of society. It sees Latin America enslaved to a capitalist system within and without. The only solution this liberation theology can offer is through a transition from capitalism to socialism, by revolutionary means, if necessary.

Novak maintains that Latin American liberation theology is based on a faulty analysis of Latin American society. Poverty and

oppression indeed prevail in Latin America, but capitalism is not the culprit. Latin America, with few exceptions, is pre-capitalist.

[I]ts present system is mercantile and quasifeudal, not capitalist . . . The present order is not free but statist, not mind-centered but privilege-centered, not open to the poor but protective of the rich. Large majorities of the poor are propertyless. The poor are prevented by law from founding and incorporating their own enterprises. They are denied access to credit. They are held back by an ancient legal structure, pre-capitalist elite.

North American liberation is based on the biblical principle of creation. Each individual has the opportunity to create, to become a participant in the growth and development of society through individual initiative. Capitalism is not a faulty economic system, according to Novak. It allows for each individual to rise above poverty, and permits each individual to create his own world through responsible use of talents and hard work.

Some weaknesses inherent in Latin American liberation theology are the facile acceptance of Marxist categories of economic analysis and the absence of a program "after the revolution." The former leads Latin American liberation theologians into strained alliances with Marxist revolutionaries, lionizes such figures as Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, and distorts the figure of Jesus of Nazareth to create a militant revolutionary figure, bent on reforming this world. The latter weakness results in hollow hortatory rhetoric, susceptible to any power base with a populist program or an organized revolutionary structure.

Novak is sympathetic in his treatment, but unbending in his application of logic and scholarship to the work of Latin American theologians. True liberation theology, he maintains, flourishes within the structures of democratic-capitalist societies.

This work presents the bias of a son of immigrants who prospered in democratic-capitalist American society. The author makes no apologies for his heritage or family history. His writing is clear, candid, and logical. I recommend this book, both for its treatment of liberation theology and its statement of basic American values.

Chaplain (LTC) William L. Hufham  
USA

## Should the Baby Live? The Problem of Handicapped Infants

*Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer*

*Oxford University Press, 1985.*

*Hardcover, 221 pages.*

Peter Singer is Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Center for Human Bioethics at Monash University, Australia. Dr. Helga Kuhse is a Researcher Fellow at the Center.

In an age of seemingly increased societal complexity, few issues challenge the pastor more than those in the area of bioethics. In this area of study, questions are asked and suggestions are made that shake the foundations of most traditional belief systems. In this book the authors fire the first dramatic round when they state: "We think that some infants with severe disabilities should be killed."

The authors very carefully and honestly trace the origins of belief in the "sanctity of life." In so facing the questions themselves the authors honestly challenge the reader, regardless of persuasion, to think seriously about the problems of handicapped infants. The question, "Is all human life of equal worth?" is answered rather painstakingly by examining the question from medical, ethical, religious, and legal perspectives. That the issue is profoundly complex is never denied by the authors who assert that there are profoundly handicapped infants who would be better off not living.

The authors distinguish between withholding treatment and killing, by rationalizing that life hasn't really begun for one, who because of severe handicaps, has no real future. This idea is largely supported by a firm belief that religion is no longer accepted as the source of moral authority in public life.

The authors provide a clear example of the kinds of issues facing today's church. It may be that this book will sharply offend the sensibilities of some readers, perhaps most readers, yet it is this very reaction that makes the book so worth the reading. The reader will be confronted, if not affronted, by the authors' conclusions that in some instances infanticide is preferable to prolonging life. Euthanasia, it is hoped by the authors, will become less offensive and eventually lead to "some possibility of mercifully ending a life at any age . . . "

The task of pastoral care is challenged and sharpened by the terribly complex nature of our age. This book speaks of and for this complexity. Today the competent pastor is called to examine positions

and perhaps restructure ways of thinking and speaking about these things. *Should the Baby Live: The Problem of Handicapped Infants* calls the pastor to prayerfully and thoughtfully face the issues of this time.

Chaplain (LTC) Richard Adams  
USA

## **How to Help Children with Common Problems**

*Charles E. Schaefer and Howard L. Millman*

*Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1981*

*Cloth \$8.95*

Dr. Schaefer is supervising psychologist at the Children's Village, Dobbs Ferry, New York, a residential treatment center for emotionally disturbed children.

Dr. Millman is Director of Psychological Services and Research at the Children's Village and past president of the Westchester County Psychological Association.

While there are numerous books available today on childrearing, none compares in usefulness and practicality to this one. "The purpose of this book is to provide parents and other adults with useful information and strategies for dealing with the everyday problems of normal children from early childhood through adolescence."

*How to Help Children* is usefully set up in a handbook format. The handbook is organized into six general categories: Immature Behaviors; Insecure Behaviors; Habit Disorders; Peer and Sibling Problems; Antisocial Behaviors; and Other Problems (sex, drug and school difficulties). For example, a parent wishing to deal with a child who whines turns to the index and finds the pages on whining. Whining is discussed in a section on Overdependent Behaviors; sub-section, Immature Behaviors.

Each problem is dealt with according to this format: A Brief Description of the Behavior; Reasons Why; How to Prevent; What to Do; Case Studies; Books for Children about the Problem; Books for Parents about the Problem; and References. None of the sections is more than ten pages long. The information is concise and gives practical options for dealing with the specific problem. I especially liked the "What to Do" section and the section called "Books for Children." By reading the books together with my daughter, she and I found new ways of talking about her problems.

I have used this book both professionally and personally, as a counsellor and as a parent. I recommend it as a reference source for all who seek to help children learn more productive ways of dealing with the problems of growing up.

Chaplain (CPT) Karen J. Dienfendorf  
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